

Pocket Series {
No. 255.

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POCKET NOVELS



The Brethren of the Coast.



THE
BRETHREN OF THE COAST;

OR,

MORGAN, THE SEA OUTLAW.

BY JOHN S. WARNER.

NEW YORK:
BEADLE AND ADAMS, PUBLISHERS,
98 WILLIAM STREET.

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BY JOHN S. WARNER

BEADLE AND ALANS, PUBLISHERS

THE BRETHREN OF THE COAST

CHAPTER I

THE SHIP AT SEA.

THE West Indies, during the sixteenth century, afforded an asylum for a race of men, or, more properly, an association of adventurers, who, for a long time, were the terror of those regions. They possessed undaunted courage and enterprise, stopping not to imbue their hands in murder; mercy was a forgotten word; blood and rapine followed upon their way, until they finally acquired a name that was never pronounced without a sense of horror. These were the BUCCANEERS, or BRETHREN OF THE COAST—called by the French, "Flibustiers."

These men first attracted notice in the island of St. Domingo. It is supposed their origin was owing to the failure of the mines in that island, and thus, being deprived of that means of obtaining a living, gradually joined in bands, and, eventually, consolidated into one great organization. They at first consisted entirely of French subjects; but, at a later day, admittance was granted to men of all nations excepting those of Spain, against which power a feeling of deadly animosity prevailed, arising from a circumstance which happened during the early days of their organization, which was this: The town of St. Christopher had been sought as an asylum by some French wanderers, who, for a time, were allowed to remain by the Spaniards; but, finally, for some cause known only to themselves, they were driven out, and subsisted by hunting wild cattle. They derived the name of Buccaneers from the Caribs, who then were a race of cannibals that first roasted and then ate their captives, and who taught

these men a curious method of preserving meat by smoking and drying. This was called "Baucau," and was ever afterward the principal food of the adventurers—hence their name, *Buccaneers*.

They had no wives or children, and for mutual support and protection lived in pairs, or in companies of as many as eight or ten. Without any law or government, they yet had certain rules or customs by which all matters could be readily adjusted, though differences seldom arose. The dress of the buccaneer consisted, at that time, of a shirt dipped in the blood of an animal just slain; a pair of trowsers; a leather girdle, from which hung a short saber and Dutch knives; a hat without a rim, save a fragment in front, by which it could be pulled on or off; shoes of raw hide, without stockings. Each man had one or more heavy muskets, and, not unfrequently, a pack of from ten to twenty dogs.

At first, the amount they received by the sale of hides to the Dutch was sufficient to cover all necessary wants; but, at last, as their numbers increased, they became conscious of their power, and commenced making inroads on the Spanish settlements, urged on by the recollections of earlier days and by a natural hate toward that country. These attacks were made in concert, and always were attended with great bloodshed. The Spaniards, not being able to subdue them, although having the assistance of soldiers procured from the neighboring islands, were at last obliged to adopt the plan—though it injured them as well as their enemies—of making an entire destruction of the wild cattle by a general chase. This had the desired effect. The buccaneers abandoned St. Domingo, and took refuge in the small Island of Tortuga.

This island, of which they found themselves the undisputed masters, is situated not far from Hayti on its extreme northwest coast, and in extent is eight leagues long and two broad, being mountainous and woody. It afforded them, in following their new course of life—which was piracy—a retreat that set at defiance all efforts to dislodge them; in fact, it would have required no small force to do this. So advantageous a situation and the promise of plunder soon brought a multitude of adventurers from every quarter. Before embarking upon an expedition, they would offer up prayers for success; nor did

they ever return, provided they had met with good fortune, but thanks were given to God for it. This custom was invariably kept; but, as to the sincerity of it, we are led to believe, from the manner in which their idle moments were spent, it was but an unholy mockery.

The precise date of our story opens in the year 1668; the month that of May; and the time early morn. A heavy ship lay becalmed, with her masts and spars reflected in the calm waters of the ocean, and her sails and stays lazily flapping and swaying to the motion of the heavy ground-swell that betokened the existence of some past violent gale. On her deck lounged several of the crew, whiling away their leisure by narrating to their listening companions the dangers they had passed. Some were leaning over the bulwarks, their eyes fixed on the dancing shadows, but their thoughts evidently far away on their Castilian homes and the loved ones waiting their return.

The commander stood aft, gazing out toward the point where the gilded clouds heralded the sun. He seemed ill at ease, for his eye would at times wander off in a southerly direction, where the faint outline of some distant land could be seen; then he would look aloft, as if hoping to see the canvas betoken some slight stir of air; but the sails hung lazily down, listlessly clinging to the mast, while the ensign of Spain had coiled itself silently round the halyards.

"You seem ill at ease, Señor Captain, I should say, judging from the expression of your features and your anxious manner," said the voice of a stately person, with the ensign of rank glittering on his breast.

"It is not pleasant, to say the least, Don Castreo," answered the Captain, in a blunt, sailor-like way. "Here have we been becalmed for over twenty-four hours, and no more signs of a breeze than at first. If there was but enough to turn a feather over it would be encouraging."

"And is that *all*? The mere fact of there being no wind that causes you to manifest uneasiness?"

Many moments elapsed before an answer was made. The Captain did not wish his companion to be informed of what he was thinking, and, by his hesitancy, seemed to be forming some way in which his fears might be kept from his

questioner. He toyed with the handle of his sword, and with his foot seemed to be industriously trying to rub off a spot of tar on the deck. At last he answered, by what nowadays would be called Yankee "cuteness," in asking a question to answer one:

"And what cause would I have, Señor, other than the one I have given?"

"I am unable to say," replied the nobleman, smiling. "But, it appears to me, that *all* commanders of vessels are not apt to feel as you evidently do when the cause for it is simply a calm."

"That may be true; but *all* captains may not have the same inducements to make quick voyages that I have."

Don Castreo made no reply, though he by no means felt satisfied, and was convinced that the causes for the Captain's uneasiness were, by far, more weighty than the one he mentioned.

The sun had now entirely risen, and the distant land loomed up so as to attract the attention of the nobleman. Turning, he asked:

"What land is that?"

"To what land do you refer?"

"That off there," he answered, pointing in a southerly direction. "I can not see any other."

"If you will cast your eye toward the westward, you will notice a small cape that juts out from the island of Cuba."

"Yes, I see—I should not have noticed it. But the other—is it not a part of the same island?"

"No, that is the island of Tortuga."

"The island of Tortuga! Why, that is the residence of the Brethren of the Coast, as they call themselves, is it not?"

"It is, Señor."

"I see thence the *true* cause of your uneasiness. You are afraid that they will discover us, and, without wind, we will be unable to make our escape. Am I right?"

"I regret to say you are," was the reluctant answer.

"But why did you adopt this course for your vessel, when it carries us so near their den?"

"I regret much, Don Castreo, that you have become acquainted with a fact I hoped none would learn. But, as

you are, it would be useless for me to attempt any disguise. I will, then, tell you all I know of these men, and why I chose this course rather than take the one usually followed by homeward-bound vessels. First, I shall lessen the length of our voyage, but that was not the reason for my course. Before leaving St. Iago de Cuba, I was informed that Henry Morgan, who is an Englishman, and the most bloodthirsty, revengeful and daring leader the buccaneers ever had, was off the Florida coast, in the Bahama channel, with all the vessels they at present are in command of. To have taken that course, we should not only have had to sail round the entire coast of Cuba, but, without doubt, would have fallen in with him, when our destruction would have been sure, and not one of us could have escaped to tell the tale, for he never shows mercy to us Spaniards. I was, then, not only advised, but thought it best myself, to take this Windward channel, and so out into the Atlantic by either the Handkerchief or the Silver Key Passage. We generally have a land-breeze off these islands, but, in our present case, it seems as if we were fated."

"But, as you say this Morgan is absent with all their vessels, what have we to fear?"

"Simply this, Señor, that they can attack us by boarding in their open boats, and in such numbers that the defense we might make would soon be overpowered. Our only means of escape would be by flight, and we can not do that except we have wind. I thought after the sun rose we might expect a slight breeze, but it does not appear as if it was to be so."

"So, then, if we are discovered, our fate is sealed?"

"Alas, Señor, it is too true!"

"But you will make all the resistance you can?"

"I shall; for we have only the same to expect whether we allow them to board us peaceably or attempt to defend ourselves. I say it will make no difference—*death* will be our portion."

"We will at least have the satisfaction of knowing, in our dying moments, that we have not only done our duty to ourselves, but to our country."

"True, Señor, but, to my mind, this is poor satisfaction."

"And why so?" asked the nobleman, indignantly.

"Because when a man sacrifices his life for his country, he dies with the hope that his people will be informed of it; but with us, we shall die and no one be the wiser of it."

"We are rather premature, Señor Captain," replied the nobleman, after a moment's pause, "in our fears, for as yet we have no cause to excite them."

"True, we *yet* have no cause, and if the wind would but spring up I would say no more about it. As it is, here we are with scarcely motion enough in the ocean to remind us that we are on its bosom. These pirates keep a sharp look-out for vessels in our plight, and I feel confident that before now we have been discovered. Every moment I—"

"Boats ho!"

Both started, and without a word gazed upon each other. That cry spoke more than either cared to know. The Captain was the first to speak, simply saying:

"Only as I expected, Señor!"

Then turning, he inquired:

"Where away?"

"Off the starboard bow, sir!"

"Can you make out how many there are?"

"No, sir, not yet!"

"Watch them sharp!—Do you feel the air stirring aloft?"

"No, sir, not a puff!"

CHAPTER II.

ALL IS LOST.

THE entire crew of the Spanish ship consisted of her Captain, two mates, and twenty-eight men. She carried as passengers, the nobleman Don Castreo, a young Englishman named Edward Seymore, and Isabel De Cordova.

Edward Seymore had left his home, partly owing to a desire to see something of the world beyond what his native village afforded, and partly on account of the exaggerated reports that had reached his ear of the immense riches that the

Island of Cuba offered to adventurers. Having no ties of kindred to bind him, he allowed his impulsive nature to carry him where it would. After satisfying himself that the riches of Cuba were not for him, he decided to visit Spain, and we find him now on his way thither.

Isabel De Cordova, the female passenger, was a native of Spain, though, at an early period, she had removed with her parents to Cuba, on account of differences between her father and the Government. She had been brought up by her aunt, and every advantage that rank and wealth could bestow had been lavishly granted her. Her father died when she was in her tenth year, and made her heir of his immense property, she being his only child. She was on her way to Spain to press the claims of her estate against the Government, under the charge of the nobleman, Don Castreo.

The hail that announced the discovery of the boats reached the ear of the two young passengers, and, with hurried steps, they ascended to the deck.

To Isabel, the existence of such an organization as we have described was entirely unknown. Not so with Seymore. He well knew the peril, but even in that first moment of exquisite anguish at thought of their possible fate, he formed the plan of a defense against immediate butchery through his English nativity. How to effect this was to be left for circumstances to determine.

"Will Señor inform me of the cause of this excitement?" asked Isabel, a few moments after reaching the deck.

"It arises from the appearance of some boats that have been discovered from the mast-head," answered Edward, with a show of uneasiness in his manner.

"Some passengers, perhaps, from one of the islands, that have noticed we are becalmed, and have seized the opportunity to come out to us."

"I wish it was so, lady."

"Are we in danger?"

"Señorita, I regret to say, for your sake, we are."

"But where?—how are we in danger?"

"You compel me to speak. You see those boats that are approaching us?"

"No, I do not. Where are they?"

He pointed in the direction where the dark line could be seen, with the occasional flash of the oars, as their blades reflected the sun's rays.

"That low stretch of land toward the south of where we are," he continued, after a moment's silence, "is, I think, the island of Tortuga. I may not be right in my surmise, but think I am—would to God it were not so!" he earnestly added. "That island, Señorita, is the abode of a horde of pirates."

"*Pirates?*" she said, interrupting him.

"Yes, lady, and of a kind that completely throw into the shade any other organization of the like that has ever existed. These men seem not only to foster the worse traits of their own characters with jealous care, but borrow the promptings of the Caribs with whom they have so much mingled. They are led—I regret much to say—by a countryman of mine: a man—no, rather a fiend, called Morgan, who, for some individual feeling of hate toward your nation, has taken a solemn oath not to spare a single Spanish life. Nay, do not start, for I am determined that yours shall be held as precious by me as my own."

He abruptly paused. His feelings led him to speak with much earnestness. Their meeting on the vessel was not an accident, if the truth were all known. Seymore had long worshiped the beautiful Isabel. His first service in Cuba had been on her estate as her commercial agent, and, though he had seen comparatively little of her, it was to admire, if not, indeed, to love. He heard, some time previous to her departure on the intended trip to Spain, of the journey, and, fruitful as all such restless hearts are in designs, he was not long in concluding to sail in the same ship, though his design was known to none. He resigned his agency, much to the regret of the good old aunt who kept Isabel in charge as her own. Seymore had proven very trusty and capable, and his loss, without apparent cause, was a source of real pain even to Isabel, who, though very little in the young Englishman's society, had the eyes and heart of a true woman to detect his worth. How surprised—nay, how pleased—she was when the vessel bore out of the bay and flung her canvas to the breeze, to find Seymore a fellow-passenger!

"As I say, this Morgan is an Englishman," he resumed

"and as soon as the pirates shall gain our deck I will proclaim my nativity. I hope thus my life will be spared, but not unless yours is also. For the success of my plans it would be well for you to feign insensibility at the commencement of the fight. I shall then have a reason for not engaging in the hand-to-hand conflict, and will be able to effect my object, I hope." There was thorough decision in his tones. Isabel was moved to tears by her alarm, yet she had a brave heart, and quickly became calm again.

"I rely entirely on you as my protector. Don Castreo appears to have forgotten me," she said. Need it be said the words thrilled through the young man's heart like music? His soul now courted danger for her sake. The boats had, meanwhile, approached, so as not only they but the number of their crews could be counted. There were eight of them, and each contained twelve men.

The Captain of the ship had not been inactive. The crew had been informed, without any attempt at disguising their situation, of the number and character of the men that were approaching, and, although they had so oft withstood the storm, and smiled at the tempest, they were completely paralyzed at the knowledge of their situation.

The ship contained but few arms. These were distributed, and the deficiency made up by turning boat-hooks, marline-spikes, and, in fact, any article that would aid in taking human life, into weapons.

The boats came up swiftly till within a short distance. They then rested on their oars, and the low hum of voices reached the ears of those on board the ship. They seemed to be receiving final orders from their leader, who was standing in the stern-sheets of the foremost pinnace.

Seymore, who was attentively noticing them, heard the order spoken in his native language of—"Give way, men!"

"That order spoken in your language seems to give Señor pleasure," said a voice.

Edward turned and found the Captain standing by his side. He answered without hesitancy:

"It is pleasant to hear one's own language spoken."

"Perhaps," replied the Captain, fixing his dark eye sternly on the young man. "Perhaps you think it may be turned to

your advantage, and by means of it you will save your life?"

"Life, Señor Captain," answered Edward, in a proud tone, for there was something in his questioner's manner that was unpleasant, "is, to the most humble thing of earth, a blessing, and all will do their utmost to save it. If I, by proclaiming myself an *Englishman*, can save mine, you may be assured I shall."

"Coward!" hissed the Spaniard.

The young man's face flushed at the insult, but he held control of his temper, and answered in a calm voice:

"Señor is not choice either in his selection of time or place for the offer of his insult," was his sharp but firm reply.

The Spaniard's hand sought the handle of his pistol as he replied:

"Mark you, Englishman, *this* I shall reserve for you. If we are to become food for sharks, we all shall—do you hear? we *all* shall! Yes, the pretty Señorita as well as you. We will make one common bond with death."

There was no time for answer, for the boats had reached the ship, and the men were boarding on both starboard and larboard sides of the bow, climbing on board by means of her chains.

For a time the Spaniards retained their position and fought like madmen; but numbers soon overpowered them, and, in spite of the endeavors of their Captain, they began slowly to yield. Not a word was spoken on either side, and the only sounds that reached the ears of Isabel, were the report of pistols, or the ringing sound of sabers as they met, interspersed by the death-cry of some poor wretch, as the bullet or sword found his life.

At the further extremity of the ship stood Seymore, his left arm supporting the apparently lifeless form of the maiden, while, in his right hand, he held his unsheathed saber. An exulting shout caused him to look up, and he saw the buccaneers had succeeded in killing or driving overboard the entire crew save five, besides the Captain, who yet continued to fight with undaunted bravery. While he still looked at that fearful sight, he noticed the Spaniard extricate himself from those that surrounded him, and, with his sword, was

carving his way toward where the two stood. Knowing well the object he had in view, Edward hurriedly whispered to his companion ;

" Fall, Señorita, from my arm to the deck, and lay motionless ; quick, for the love of heaven. The Captain intends to sacrifice our lives if he reaches here, and I shall defend them, if I am obliged to take his in doing so !"

Isabel, without a word, did as he requested ; and as he turned, he beheld the Captain but a few feet from him.

An idea entered his mind, that he could turn to advantage this circumstance, which he plainly saw, owing to the fury of the Spaniard, could not be avoided, and he determined to make use of it. Raising his voice and speaking in his own language, he shouted :

" Stand back, and let him come ! It is I he wants for his prey ; let him have his revenge !"

The pirates who were opposing his progress immediately gave way, and the two stood face to face. There was not a man of that entire ship's crew now on her decks alive, and the buccaneers gathered round to witness what to them was a novel sight—a contest between two of the same vessel. Space sufficient was allowed, and, so intensely were they interested in the two men, that the form of Isabel had not been noticed.

" I am here to fulfill my promise, Señor !" exclaimed the Captain, in a voice of calm politeness.

" You should say you are here to take my life," answered Seymour.

" As you will, if the expression suits you better."

" I shall defend it," was the decided answer.

" I do not intend giving you the chance"

" Then it is to you the term *coward* will apply, and not to me."

" Words, Señor, can not avail now. Look round on these men, and tell me if you can read in their faces pity for a Spaniard. Is there a glance that speaks mercy for *me* ? Where are my men ? Dead ! and I will soon follow them ; but my last moments shall be made sweet by taking with me the soul of a man too much of a *coward* to help defend his companions' lives ! You shall not have the satisfaction even of

defending your miserable life." He drew from his belt a pistol as he spoke, and calmly cocked it.

"Hold!" exclaimed Seymore. "Give me the chances of an equal contest, and I will pledge you that these men, if you succeed in overpowering me, will spare your life." Then raising his voice he asked of those surrounding them: "You have heard what I have promised this man; will you agree to it?"

"We will," was the answer.

"Think you that I would take either your word or theirs?" said the Captain, a smile of scorn wreathing his lips as he spoke. "No, not for life itself would I forego the pleasure of sending this ball through your English heart!" The weapon was raised suddenly and discharged; but the ball went wide of its mark, as the muzzle was struck upward, and a harsh Scotch voice exclaimed:

"Na, man, ye maunna use that. If ye be to fight, ye maun take yer ain sword to do it wi'!"

"Then be it so! Come, Señor!"

Edward approached, and their swords crossed. For a moment their looks were centered on each other, and Seymore felt a respect for the calm, quiet way his antagonist seemed to regard the passing events. But a moment was given him. With a motion quick as thought, the Spaniard made a feint as if to touch him on the left side under the guard, then hastily recovering his position, he wound his blade rapidly round that of his antagonist, and, **thrusting** over, endeavored to pierce his right breast. But Seymore was too well versed in the game of life and death with the sword, to be caught. He recoiled a step without attempting to parry the thrust. Then quickly striking his adversary's weapon, before time had been given for the Captain to recover his guard, he knocked it from his grasp. So adroitly had this maneuver been performed, that it called forth a burst of applause from the buccaneers.

"That was a good straik, and ye be a bonnie lad!" exclaimed the Scotchman, whom we must here introduce to the reader by the name of Donald.

The Spaniard stood a moment, but only for a moment. Springing to his weapon he seized it, and renewed the attack with so much fury that Seymore was obliged to give ground

round the little circle they fought, neither taking his eye from the other. At last, from thorough exhaustion, they let the points of their weapons rest on the deck.

"Is Señor again ready?" asked the Captain, after a brief pause.

"I am—take your guard, sir."

Once more were their swords crossed, and again the duel—if it could be called such—commenced.

"Dinna be rash, man; ye maunna fight so hot; bide yer time!" said Donald, in a warning voice, to the young Englishman.

Seymore felt the force of this advice, and abated somewhat of his fury. He had endeavored to press the fight whenever his antagonist seemed to lag, hoping, as he was much the younger man, to weary him out. He now acted on the defensive, and soon perceived the advantage it was giving him. The position they had at first occupied was now completely changed, the Captain being where Seymore had been, and but a few feet from Isabel, who was not now feigning insensibility, but lay in a swoon of terror at the horrid events of this moment. During the short pauses that would occur by times, Seymore noticed the Spaniard sweep the deck behind him with a fierce cut of his sword. At first he thought it owing to the other's rage; but now the fearful truth burst upon him. Not daring to remove his look from the young man, he was endeavoring to strike his weapon in her prostrate body. Seymore uttered no word, but grasping his weapon with new force, he resumed the attack with so much fierceness that the Spaniard was obliged to retreat from the place which he had fought so hard to obtain. As he reached the foot of the main-mast, he seized what he thought an unguarded moment on the part of the Englishman, who had allowed his sword's point to lower, and thrust his weapon full for his breast. His antagonist sprung quickly one side, and, inclosing the blade under his left arm, turned his body quickly round, tearing it from the other's grasp; then, shortening his own, he plunged it through the Captain's body. A slight quivering, a darkening shadow settled itself upon his face like the twilight darkening over a landscape. A momentary look of hate flashed from his eye, a choking sound as if he essayed to speak,

and the Spaniard slowly settled to the deck. The Captain had rejoined his crew.

More like a statue hewn from the flinty rock than a being of flesh and blood, Seymore stood looking down upon his dead foe. He was at last aroused from his spell by a rough hand laid on his shoulder, and the harsh, yet apparently friendly voice of Donald saying:

"Ye maunna look on him, laddy; 'twill do ye na good. Ah, weel, it's mony the day sith I looked upon the like, me an' sel'. Let-a-be, laddy, let-a-be, and look to the bonnie liddy."

Recovering his composure, Seymore hastened to Isabel's still senseless form. He lifted it tenderly in his arms, and bore her to the vessel's side for a breath of the sea-air to touch her lips. A drop of water from a cup proffered by Donald soon restored consciousness.

"Señor, are we saved?" she asked, faintly, as she recalled all.

"I hope so," he replied.

"And the Captain?"

"Is dead."

"O God, how horrible!"

"I had to do it—" he began, but she interrupted him.

"No, no, Señor; do not think I blame you; you have but done your duty. But you have not spoken to these men?"

"I have not, but I am sure they will not take our lives."

"Well, young man," exclaimed a gruff voice, "what do you suppose is to become of you?"

"I am unable to say," answered Edward.

"You are sure there is no Spanish blood in your veins?"

"Not one drop; though," he added, "I don't say so from fear, but because it is the truth. I am an Englishman."

"I thought so; so am I. But this girl—those eyes of her's tell where she hails from, and my sword seems uneasy in its scabbard. Morgan has never yet spared a Spaniard's life, nor would he now, were he here, hesitate in taking hers. Unless I break my oath she must be numbered with the rest."

"Not while I live to defend her, or carry a weapon at my belt!" replied Seymore, his eye flashing fire, and his hand grasping the hilt of his sword as he spoke.

"Stop, young man, a moment. Your words or that action

are not going to mend matters. I did not say that I *should* take her life, nor did I say that I should not break my oath. I'll tell you plainly that I have no wish to cross swords with you after seeing the way in which you have so lately used it. I am your countryman, and would do you a favor if you will let me; but I will say, without trying to hide the fact, that if you were alone it would be better for you."

"If you are a true Englishman, and, as you say, you would like to do me a favor, you will tell me plainly what I am to expect, and why it would be better if this lady was not in my company?"

"As to yourself, we buccaneers have but two ways of disposing of prisoners. Either they must join the brotherhood, or else become our slaves. You will have your choice. Of the girl's hereafter I can not tell you, as Morgan will arrange that to suit himself on his return, which will be in a day or two. There is a circumstance which you may be thankful for, and it is, that I am the commander of these men for the time being; and not our leader you have to contend with, for, were he here, that girl's blood would have flown long before now, and yours, too, had you dared to murmur, much less to act."

"And do you imagine this Morgan is not flesh and blood, and could not a sword's point find his black heart? Come, I'll fight either you or him, or both of you; and mark—you who bear the name of Englishman, though you do not merit it—I say, mark you: if one hair of that girl's head is harmed by any of your accursed crew, I will devote my life to the work of blood, and shall not sheathe my sword till I can look down into the senseless eye of the last of your gang. Do you hear me?"

"I do, and pity you. Are you mad, or is your life worthless, that you speak so? Fool, I say 'tis well that it is I, not Morgan, you speak with. Come, talk like a man, and I'll listen to you. I say that, as a countryman of mine, I wish to be friendly to you; but how can I, when you make such threats—though I smile at them; for, did I lisp one word of what you have said to these men around us, your stay on earth would last but a moment. And now let me give you a warning. You may be flattering yourself with the hope of

escape from our island after you reach it; but there is only one way that leads from it, and I will tell you how to find it—shall I?" The pirate's voice sunk to a deep, impressive tone as he uttered, slowly: "*Death* is the gate, and when you try to escape, you will but open its door. As to the road beyond, I can not instruct you further; but we each have a key to unlock *that* gate, and know how to use it." He slowly drew his saber from its scabbard, saying, as he did so: "This is one of many keys, ever waiting to be used against an *enemy*!"

He gazed hard at Seymore for a moment, and then letting the blade slide back with a ringing sound, turned and walked away.

These simple yet impressive words, together with the accompanying action, convinced the young man of the folly either of resistance or of fury at his fate.

A fresh breeze, meanwhile, had sprung up. The boats were made fast under the stern, the sails trimmed, and the vessel slowly commenced moving toward her new home.

Edward was standing by the side of Isabel, looking out at the island as they approached it, now and then uttering a word of encouragement, or some hurried instruction, when he was interrupted by a low whisper, and, turning, saw Donald coiling away a rope but a few feet from where he stood.

"Dinna look up, laddy, nor let *them* ken ye hear me," he said, hurriedly, laying much stress on the word *them*. "I will help ye baith to gae wa' frae here, or my name isn't Donald."

"You do not mean you will help us escape?" said the young man, in much surprise.

"Hush! ye maunna speak so loud. I'se gang wi' ye mysel', for I canna stay wi' them."

From the gesture that accompanied this last remark, Seymore knew the Scotchman wished to speak no further on such a dangerous topic, and though it was hard for him to refrain, now he knew he had a friend, the idea entered his mind as to whether or not the Scotchman was acting the part of spy; but the man's earnest manner—for there is a sincerity in action which the voice does not possess—convinced him to the contrary.

Before proceeding further, we wish to say a word in extenuation of our Scotch character. Did we render the Scotch dialect fully, the majority of our readers would be able to make little sense of it. We therefore give enough to have it *read* Scotch, and thus, if possible, to preserve something of its quaintness and truthfulness of speech.

The breeze now blew stronger, sending the vessel swiftly toward its port. The buccaneers were gathered in groups about the deck, discussing, for the most part, the qualities possessed by their many companions who had fallen under the swords of the crew. Seymore still remained by the side of his charge. Not a word had either spoken since Donald's remarks, but both felt more hopeful now that they were not friendless and entirely alone.

"That island would be a beautiful spot were it other than it is," Seymore remarked, at length wearying of the silence.

"Indeed it would, Señor; the associations mar its beauty," she replied.

"The history connected with these buccaneers, is, in itself, one of much interest. During my stay on Cuba I was fully made acquainted, by an inhabitant of St. Domingo, with their whole story."

"May the time come," she answered, with a tearful earnestness, "when Señor will have the opportunity of narrating the history. But, alas! I fear we shall learn too much of them here. I am filled with terror at what may happen. Oh, Edward, it had been better if we had died on this deck!"

She sobbed violently, and hung heavily on his arm.

"Dear Isabel, look up, and do not unman me by your grief and fears. Morgan is not a sacrificer of virtue, even if he is of life. You will be spared your worst fears, I know. Let the thought of this, and that I am also near you, be of some comfort, or I shall feel despondent indeed."

The maiden looked up, and smiled faintly, as she replied.

"I will not be a burden to you, Edward. I will try and be strong and brave for your sake as well as my own."

He bent over her, and pressed his lips to hers, and the murmured words—"I will be true to you!" came from her tongue, to sink into her lover's soul like a command to save her.

It was a moment of pure joy even at that terrible hour, when such horrors stared them in the face.

CHAPTER III.

THE BUCCANEERS AT HOME.

"STAND by forward and clear the cable of that anchor—the one on the starboard bow. Those Spaniards have let as many knots get in it as if it was a bit of string," was the order, as the vessel rounded the point of the harbor.

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the cheerful response.

"What are you doing aft, you lubber, with that helm? Shut your eyes, and feel how to steer if you can't *see*! Lay aloft men, and in with the light sails—work lively. Port—steady!"

The crew sprung quickly to their work, and soon the ship was stripped of her canvas, with but enough standing to round her to when she arrived at her ground.

Nature seemed to have formed this island as an asylum for its present occupants. A long stretch of rocky cliff and shore surrounded its harbor on the north and south, acting as a breakwater, the island itself sheltering it from the west. A narrow causeway, or opening in the rock, extended from the summit to the shore, which, by much labor, had been constructed into a rude stairway. Planted on the top were two heavy guns, that swept its entire length, so that, had an armed force succeeded in landing, it could not have reached the summit. From the cliff stretched a gentle slope, on which could be seen the rude homes of the buccaneers. The background lay in primitive wildness, with the ragged top of some huge rock here and there looking out like some grim sentinel through the trees. The sea-gulls, as they circled round the ship, seemed to welcome back the pirates in their wild screams. It was a picturesque spot, too beautiful and inviting for its bloody desecration. The associations marred its natural beauty.

"Are you clear, forward?" asked the officer.

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the reply.

"What water have you? What are you doing? Heave the lead!"

The lead was taken forward and hove. When the line reached the after part of the main chains, the voice of the seaman replied, in drawling tones :

"By the deep, nine."

"Lay her further toward the point of that cliff," said the officer, pointing out the spot he meant. "What water have you now?"

"And a half, eight."

"Keep her away a point—this is the first time I've seen a ship of this size in here."

"She's the biggest one we have, sir," replied the helmsman.

"No, the Mary's a few tons heavier. That will do," he added, as the required depth was announced. "Put your helm down—hard—stream the buoy, and let go the anchor."

The order was executed, and the ship for the first time rested in the pirates' cove.

"Now, my rovers, in with every rag, neatly. I want our Captain to open his eyes when he comes in. Work lively, and then we'll overhaul the cargo."

This last remark was inspiring enough, and the ship soon lay under bare poles.

The buccaneers appeared so entirely occupied with the inspection of her cargo, that the persons of Isabel and Seymore were not noticed. They stood clasping hands, too happy in their sweet consciousness of each other's presence, to be alarmed at what was transpiring around. How long they stood in their dream they never realized. A sharp "ha! ha!" startled them from their silence.

"Ha! ha!" echoed other voices.

Seymore turned, and his eyes fairly scintillated with fire as he beheld the leader of the pirates, and several of the men, pausing in their work to enjoy a moment's sport at the expense of their captives.

"Wretches!" the young man hissed, "you are less than brutes to mock at helplessness."

"Oh, not at all," answered the leader. "We are only enjoying the sight of your amiable advances to that girl, and her amiable acceptance of them, when both are doomed to an early separation. So go on with your courting; it will soon be all up with you both."

"At least *you* have not the control over us, and I hesitate not to say, I would sooner deal with your chieftain than with such a wretch as you."

"Pooh, pooh, you do not know what you say. Why, man, I am a lamb compared to him. But," he added, his voice growing stern, "in future I want you to have a care how you speak with me; so far, I have borne all your insults without punishment, but this must be the last. What do you suppose *I* care what becomes of *you*? You are one kind of a man, I another! You choose to work honestly for a living—if you work at all—while I choose to rob ships for mine, and snuff the salt ocean as a Brother of the Coast. But I must wish that girl of yours joy in shipping for the cruise of life with you, though you have not made sail from port yet, and, it is my way of thinking, when you come to heave your anchor, you'll find your cables foul. So let's have a kiss, my beauty, and hope you will always have the wind off your quarter. *That's* the breeze we like to sail by."

He approached Isabel as he spoke, and attempted to seize her person; but Edward stepped before her, saying in a voice husky with passion:

"Dare to lay your hands on her, and I will send your soul after those of this ship's crew, and your body to feed the sharks."

"Come, come, young man—well, if you will, take it!"

He struck full at Seymore with his clenched fist, but with no avail. The young man was not unskilled in defense without arms. Fending the blow with his left arm, he struck the pirate on the forehead, sending him to the deck with stunning force. He lay a moment, then rising to his feet, drew his sword partly from its sheath, but, letting it slide back again, he passed his hand across his forehead several times, as if not yet recovered from the effects of the blow.

"Curse you for a lubber," he exclaimed. "If I don't get your head-lanyard cut for this, you can call me no true seaman. Here, men, some of you, lay hands on this covey and rope him down, but don't hurt a hair of his head!"

Seymore, who yet retained his saber, had now drawn it, and stood in an attitude of defense. Isabel, as she saw it, hurried to his side saying:

"For my sake, *dear* Edward, make no resistance, but let them bind you; it surely will be better for us both!"

The young man acted upon her wish, though it smarted his proud spirit to yield his hand to be securely fastened without resistance. The men made no remarks while performing the order, but turned quickly, after executing it, to the more pleasant task of pursuing their search into the rich cargo with which the ship was laden.

"Well, sir," said the lieutenant, "you will be obliged to be quiet now. Whether you believe me or not, yet I tell you, I hate to bind one of my countrymen."

"I wish for no further parley. The word, or assurance of such a man as you, is like the winds, forever changing," answered Seymore.

The buccaneer looked hard at him a moment, then turning, descended below. Hardly had he disappeared, when Donald was observed coming aft, carelessly glancing around as if he was searching for some article. Arriving within a short distance, he raised his head, and, looking about the deck, noticed that some of the few pirates who remained above were observing him, and he hurriedly said, in a low tone:

"Dinna be doon hearted, man; it's a' for the best."

"How so," asked Seymore. "That man will do all he can to avenge the blow I gave him."

"'Twould be a' the same when Morgan comes; ye would be made a prisoner then. Gie it the cauld shoulder; 'twill be a' weel soon."

"What will they do with me, and this young lady?" he asked.

"They will take ye baith on shore. Ye they will lock up for a time, and the leddy, I dinna ken where they will put her. But, they wounna scaith her," he added, quickly, as he saw the troubled looks of both faces. "Ye will see me soon, laddy; so keep up a buiraly heart."

Saying this, he turned away to rejoin his companions.

An hour passed before the lieutenant again appeared on deck. At last he came, followed by his men. The cargo had been inspected as far as possible, and from their countenances Edward saw that they were highly pleased with their prize.

"Haul one of the boats round, men, and let's get our live freight on shore."

The boat was soon in readiness, and the lashings of the young man being cast off, he helped Isabel to descend into her. When she was comfortably seated in the stern sheets, the order was given.

"Give way, my hearties."

The oars were thrown forward, then held a moment, and all the blades dipped at the same time; the men threw themselves on them with a will, and the boat, with a bound, started for the shore. A short time sufficed to reach the rude landing, where their prisoners were disembarked, and commenced the ascent of the stairway. When they arrived on the summit, they proceeded toward the largest building in the place, which they entered. Here Seymore was obliged to part from his companion, and was hurried forward through a long, dark passage. The men finally reached a door made of strong plank and thickly studded with iron nails. This, one of them opened with a key he had taken from a nail in the outer room, and again the young man was hurried on. He knew from the length of the gallery, and the many turns he had taken, that he was under ground, for the appearance of the house from the outside convinced him it was not of sufficient size to enable him to walk so long a distance under its roof; besides, the place had a damp, earthy smell. A small door on the right was opened, and his conductors motioned him to enter, saying that food would be served him at regular intervals.

The hollow sound that reverberated along the gallery as the door closed, struck a dismal chord in his breast. At first it was so dark as not to allow him to see the room's dimensions. As his eye became accustomed to the gloom, he found himself in a cave, some ten feet broad, and perhaps thirty in length. At its further extremity had been an opening, but it had been securely walled up, and the only light that found its way in came through a small crevice above. As he listened he could distinctly hear the dash of the surf, and felt convinced that he was near to the ocean. The place contained a rude cot, and, feeling weary, he stretched himself upon it, not to sleep, but to set about devising some plan,

whereby they could effect, with a probability of success, their escape.

The apartment that had been assigned to Isabel was sumptuously furnished. The floor was covered with a rich carpet, and the other furniture was in keeping with it. It brought no pleasant thoughts to her now. What was gold and silken drapery to her—a prisoner, reserved, perhaps, for a torture worse than death? And Edward—how painfully did separation from him smite upon her heart! She sat down upon a tempting couch, not to weep, but to think sternly of the reality of her situation. That she truly and entirely loved her protector, her heart's yearning after his presence told her. What fortune was there in store for her? The wild, fierce Castilian blood surged fast in her veins at some thought which possessed her, for she sprung from the couch and paced the floor defiantly.

"I will die by my own hand if I am harmed!"

This mood passed away, when she again cast herself upon the couch and wept unrestrainedly.

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY MORGAN.

By the light that alternately came and went through the seams of his dungeon's roof, Seymore was enabled to count the passage of time. Food had been abundantly supplied, and, what seemed astonishing to him, was, that it consisted of the finest quality. Had he known by whom it was sent, his astonishment would have ceased. The Scotchman had been given charge of the two captives, and had supplied them bountifully with the best of every thing the island afforded.

The third day dawned without witnessing the arrival of the chieftain, Morgan. Toward the middle of the afternoon, as near as the young man could estimate, he was startled by the booming sound of a distant gun, and, as he rightly

inferred, far out at sea. The signal received a corresponding answer from shore. It heralded the arrival of Morgan.

The day had far waned, and the darkness was gathering within his prison. His evening meal had been usually brought to him before this time, but, as yet, it had not arrived. He did not wait long, however, for the sound of footsteps met his ear, and Donald, unbarring the door, entered. Setting a lantern, which he carried, on the floor he carefully closed the door, and, approaching the young man, hurriedly said :

"Morgan has cam, laddy, and he kens yer here, but winna see ye till morning. Take my advice and dinna let him think yer caring for him; be bauld and face him like a man, and he will think all the more o' ye. Ye winna be scaith, I tell you so my ain sel'."

"Thank you, good Donald. I will follow your advice. I do not think it would advance my interests to appear cowardly, but I will not be rash. Will he see me to-morrow, think you?"

"I ken he wen," answered Donald, positively.

"Did you hear him say so?"

"Yes, and ken what the lieutenant told him."

"What was it?"

"He said, 'We ha' two prisoners, Captain—one an Englishman, and the other a Spanish leddy.'"

"And then what did he say?"

"That he should na see either of ye till morning. But, I maun gae wa' laddy, for they maunna find us togither."

"I would wish to speak further with you, Donald, but do not wish to run any risk. When you see Isabel, tell her how I am, and cheer her up with the hope of escape."

"I will, laddy; so good-night."

"Good-night, and God bless you."

The door was closed, the bolts shot into their places, and Donald, as he wended his way back along the gallery, broke out in the song of—

"Are these the Links of Forth, she said,
Or are they the crooks of Dee,
Or the bonnie woods of Warroch-head
That I so fain would see?"

The rest was lost as his footsteps died away in the distance.

"A light-hearted fellow, and a firm friend," said Seymore, speaking to himself. "Yes, Donald, you shall sing that song on your native heather, if we succeed in making our escape from among these accursed men. So, in the morning, Morgan will allow me the *privilege* of seeing him! Well, so he shall; but he will find as good British blood flows in my veins as in his own, and if he wants the trial, why, with a blade in my hand, and a firm sod under my feet, he will find, I know, the use of steel. But, to-morrow will take care of itself."

He threw himself on the bed, and soon was lost in slumber.

The morning dawned, and, as the first rays of light began slowly to disperse the darkness of his dungeon, the door was opened, and a stern voice bade him follow.

The long gallery was retraced, the first door passed, which now stood open, and, after being hurried through several small apartments, he was ushered into the presence of the dreaded Morgan. The room, which appeared to be a sort of council-chamber, was sometimes used for that purpose, but more frequently for the division of plunder. It was hung round with the flags of almost every nation, interspersed with here and there a cluster of pistols, Dutch knives and sabers, and, in fact, with all the smaller arms used in warfare. On rude benches, placed around the walls, sat at least two hundred men. Many of them, as if to add still more to their repulsive countenances, had bandages binding their heads, thickly clotted with blood. At the further extremity stood the chieftain, caressing the head of a large blood-hound, that licked his hand in return. He would have been taken as one belonging to the very nation against which he warred with such inveterate hate. The hair hung low on his shoulders, in jetty curls; his heavy beard and moustache, together with his small, keen eye, all of the somber hue, would have made the young man take him for a Spaniard had he not known the contrary. In dress he was plainly, yet elegantly attired. His limbs were incased in tight-fitting leggings of finely prepared leather; he wore high top-boots, from the legs of which dangled crimson tassels. The rest of his garments consisted of a short coat, or, more properly, a heavy shirt, confined at

the waist by his sword-belt, and, opening at the collar, showed a black velvet waistcoat. His collar, turned down, so as to exhibit his muscular neck, was confined at the point by a pin of diamonds. On his head rested jauntily a blue velvet cap, with a wide band of scarlet fastened in front by a clasp of the like precious jewels; and a single snowy ostrich feather gracefully drooped over his shoulder. In his belt were two elegantly worked pistols, and his left hand rested on the hilt of a heavy sword, while, with his right, he still continued to play with the dog. In stature he was full six feet, and large, yet gracefully built.

The man appeared so entirely different, now that Seymore saw him, from what his imagination had pictured, that he really felt something like awe of him, if not respect. That he had been driven to pursue the course of life he now followed, rather than to have selected it from choice, was Seymore's first thought. He advanced to within a few feet of the buccaneer, and then paused. Morgan raised his head, and running his eye over him at a glance, spoke in a pleasant, yet authoritative voice:

"You are the prisoner?"

"I am one of them," answered the young man, calmly fixing his eyes on those of his questioner.

"And you are an Englishman, they tell me."

"My looks, my language, should inform you of that fact."

"Together with your independent manner," said the chieftain, smiling. "From what part of my native isle did you come?"

"I last sailed from London."

"You were not born there?"

"No, my native place is a small village in Yorkshire."

"Then you are truly an Englishman, and you and I shall not be enemies."

"I have no wish to be the enemy of any man."

"And certainly not of me, if you study your own welfare."

"True, I am wholly in your power, and would wish for your good-will; but, at the same time, I would not force myself into any course of conduct which my better nature should revolt at."

"There is but one way by which you can ever hope to make me your friend; will you accept of it?"

"Name it, and if I can I will," answered Seymore, though he well knew in what that bond of friendship would consist.

"Answer me a question first, and speak without restraint. What name do you give our band?"

"*Pirates*," was the unhesitating and emphasized answer.

A low laugh ran through the group. Morgan merely smiled as he answered:

"That is the name given us by the outer world. I call it the outer world because we have a world of our own—a universe of self-construction in this sea-girt island. No king, no earthly potentate—and, for that, we acknowledge no rule save our own—controls our action. We govern ourselves as we like; nor stoop to other guidance than our own hearts dictate. But, as some of us had an ear for poetry, the word *Pirate* was too harsh; so, for a smoother sound, and deeper meaning, we named ourselves 'The Brethren of the Coast.' Young man," he added, his voice changing to a commanding tone, "Young man, will you join that brotherhood?"

"Never," was the decisive answer.

"Stand back, men—do you hear me? I say, *stand back!*" thundered their leader, as a score or more of the buccaneers sprung toward Edward to resent the indignity of his refusal to become one of their number.

"Nay, if that is your play, you cowardly whelps," said Seymore, in hot haste, "give me a weapon, and choose your man, and I will soon show what one true arm can do in letting out vile blood."

"Back to your places, every one! When I want you, I will call for you," said Morgan, addressing his men. Then, turning to Seymore, he continued:

"You are over rash, and your impetuosity may lead you into unnecessary difficulties. I do not think the worse of you for refusing my offer in the manner you have, though it will be worse for yourself. Will you give me the reasons for it, though I can well form an idea of what they are?"

"I will. You submit to no law or order save that of your own making. You plunder the seas in unholy theft. You murder your own kind and spare no age, no sex. Your very

lives are written in blood and cruelty. The blessed sense of mercy is dead in your souls, and, as you have shown no mercy to others, a just God will surely show you and your blood-stained men no mercy hereafter. You are the terror of mankind, but you are preparing a greater terror for yourselves."

"The very words I imagined *you* would use. But, tell me, could nothing, no turn of life, no event that transpired, tempt you to relinquish your *prejudices*? Think well before you speak."

"I do not for one moment hesitate in saying, nothing could change the unspeakable horror which I feel for your calling," was the firm reply.

"You are either very different from the common mass of men, or else you do not know yourself. But we will, on the morrow, talk of this. As my countryman, I like you; as a brave man I respect you; and, as it so pleases me, I will tell you a story, that not one of these men has ever heard. Your determination in not joining us, is, I know, a fixed one. There is but one other choice, and it is to my mind a far worse one—you must be our *slave*, must neither share our spoils nor our pleasures, but must toil by day and by night to do a menial's labor. But, as I am a merciful man, when it pleases me so to be, I will make you an offer, whereby the duties you will have to perform will be comparatively light, if you succeed. It is this: we have a man among us, who, in the art of swimming, has never been excelled. Will you enter the contest with him, and, if you succeed in overcoming him, I pledge you my word that your work will be of as light a nature as can be found."

"I consent, willingly," he answered, without hesitancy.

"Yet you will be a slave after all."

"I shall resist," replied the young man.

"You will be overpowered."

"Nevertheless, I shall make the trial."

"Where is your weapon, *fool*, to do it with?"

This last remark stung his very soul, and, once more entirely losing all command of himself, he sprung on one of the band that stood near. Tearing from his belt the saber he wore, before the man was aware of his purpose, circling the heavy blade round his head as if it had been a willow wand,

he shouted in almost madness, entirely forgetting Isabel, Donald's warning, even his very self:

"Cowards, all of you, to taunt a man with words, when you know you outnumber him, and think to take advantage of his helpless situation. Come, some of you—I care not who—and try the point of this weapon; its edge is as cutting in my hands as your words are to me. You, Morgan," he said, turning to the chieftain, "draw your sword, and cross blades with me for a matter of life or death!"

The buccaneer simply smiled, and sternly motioning back a few of the pirates who had risen, said:

"Young man, you have a soul that overlooks all difficulties. Lower the point of your weapon; it shall not be taken from you till of your own free will you yield it up; and tell me, as your eye scans the numbers who surround you, and who would tear you limb from limb did I but give the slightest signal, what do you expect to gain by such outbursts of passion, such utter madness of action? You do not like the word *fool*, but does it not apply? In reason now I ask you, is the term misplaced?"

There was a force of argument in this he could not gainsay. Throwing the weapon toward its owner, he said:

"I grant, sir Captain, that my actions were useless; but I have within my breast a heart that will not take the simplest word of insult, and much rather would I take my stand before a man of your own choosing, and fight it out, than do as I am now obliged to."

"For your own sake you have arrived at the right conclusion, and, in future, I hope to see no more such flashes of passion."

"I would say a word with you privately," said Seymore

"Speak out. We brothers hold no secrets from each other," the chief answered, raising his voice so as all could hear.

"What are your intentions regarding the young lady?"

"She is very dear to you—am I right?" he asked, without answering the question.

"She is very dear to me, sir,"

"I regret to hear it, because she never can be permitted any association with you. She must either live with one of my men, or, not live at all," was his calm, stern reply.

What outburst of passion on the part of Seymore would have followed this remark, it is impossible to say; for, at the moment, one of the men rushed in with the information that two vessels, apparently Spanish, were to be seen from the look-out.

Morgan's manner changed like magic. Raising his voice to the tones of stern command, he rapidly gave his orders:

"Down to your boats, and man the three swiftest vessels—set every rag they'll carry, and have a boat for me. I'll be with you before you are ready! You, Donald, take this man back to his cell, and lock him in carefully. Stay on shore, yourself, to attend him. Watch him as you would watch a lynx!"

Saying this, he disappeared, and the Scotchman conducted Seymore to his cave. As they entered it, Donald said:

"Ye maunna gie way to your temper, laddy, so much. If ye do, I canna help ye."

"It is almost impossible to help it. It was born with me, and, though I check it as much as I can, the words and actions of Morgan made me lose entirely all control over it."

"Gie it the cauld shouter. If not for your ain sel', for the sake of the leddy."

"True, I see I must. If I could but always remember her then the task would be an easy one."

"Now, laddy," he said, after a moment's pause, and leading him to where the extremity of the cave had been walled up, "I ha' been at work a little for the last three days at this wall wi' some tools, and about a week more I shall be through. Ye maunna try to help me, because it wid na be weel; they may find ye out."

"And where does it lead to?" asked Seymore, in much surprise.

"Out on the cliff."

As our hero was not satisfied with so short an answer, Donald hurriedly gave him an outline of his proposed plan of escape, and then left the cave.

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER CHASE. ISABEL IN PRISON.

The buccaneer reached his vessel, and the three were standing out of the harbor, with every stitch of canvas set. The wind blew a stiff breeze from the southward, and the water gurgled merrily under their cut-waters as they each lay well over on their bearings, with their starboard tacks aboard.

"Keep her steady for that headland," said Morgan to the helmsman.

The ships they were in pursuit of were standing toward the north-west, and, by this time, were hull down, nothing to be seen but their upper sails, from the size of which it was evident that they were large vessels. Why they were standing on that course, seemed somewhat to astonish those on the pirate vessels.

"Take your glass," said the Captain to his first officer, "and see what you can make of them fellows."

The lieutenant sprung aloft, and in a few moments shouted

"I can't make them out, sir; they'll have to lift a little!"

"Put your helm up—steady! A small pull on the weather braces," came the orders in quick succession, and they were as rapidly executed.

"Can you make them out yet?"

"They are heavy merchantmen, sir!"

"So much the better. Keep a sharp look-out and let me hear from you when they lift!"

The pirates were for the most part gathered on the fore-castle, gazing out, with hungry glances, at their victims. The ship being now dead before the wind, went rushing madly through the water with the speed of a race-horse, the bubbles whizzing along her sides, and passing rapidly astern in her long and glittering wake. The Captain would run his eye over the canvas occasionally, to see how it drew, and then glance at the man in charge of the helm, who would merely answer the look by a similar glance aloft.

"I can make them out now!" came the voice of the officer

‘ Well, what are they !’

“ What I said they were, sir—merchantmen. Their courses show to the very foot. Here come their hulls, sir, and they are settled deep as if they were heavily loaded. They are setting their light sails.”

“ Well, that will do. Come on deck and get the magazine open. The men are short of powder.”

They were soon supplied, and busily engaged in loading their arms. Some, with apparent unconcern, were running their fingers over the edge of their sabers, as if they were about engaging in a slaughter of cattle. The remaining two vessels were close astern, and their crews were similarly engaged.

Their course was now changed, the three standing further to the south-east, with their larboard tacks aboard, and close-hauled, as the merchantmen had altered their course and were standing more to the southward. It was evident that they hoped to give the pirates a stern chase, and as they were near the Florida coast, hoped to be able to run their ships into some port where they could be safe. Vain hope ! As well might they expect to outsail the wind itself, as the coursers that followed in their tracks. Every moment the distance was rapidly decreasing, and the buccaneers, like hounds in the leash, were eager for their prey.

“ Lay her close, as close as she’ll fill, and get that gun ready forward ; we’ll have a shot into him, just to see splinters fly !” exclaimed Morgan, as they came up within range.

The long gun was cast loose, the foresail lifted, the match applied, and the piece belched forth its stream of fire and smoke, sending the ball ricocheting along the waves until it buried itself a few fathoms astern of the merchantman. He kept on, however, without even running his colors to the gaff.

“ Come, you infernal lubber, is that the way you handle your piece ? Take one more trial, and if you don’t show a white spot on his black sides, I’ll ram you home for a ball the next time !” said the buccaneer, in an angry tone.

The gun was quickly loaded, and the man, squinting along the piece a moment, raised his head.

“ Well, what are you waiting for ?”

“ If you’ll lay her closer, sir, I can do better !”

"Aft, there! Let her come up a point; that will do; now let him have it!"

Again the match was applied, and again sped the iron messenger to accomplish its work. The smoke, like a snowy vail, hung round the mouth of the piece a moment, then went scudding to leeward. Both Captain and gunner stepped quickly to one side, and gazed after the shot. A shout broke simultaneously from the lips of both, as they saw the splinters fly in a shower from his bulwarks, a few feet forward of the mainmast.

"Try it again; the fellow seems to like that fun, for he keeps on; but he is armed!" he exclaimed, in the same breath, as a stream of smoke curled from his deck, and a ball went whizzing over their heads.

"Work your gun lively; are you ready?"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Down with your helm; steady so—*Fire!*"

Once more was the gun discharged, and this time the top-sail was seen to tremble a moment, and then to fall from the cap. The loss of this important sail seemed to be instantly felt, for the vessel brought up all shaking. What this was for the pirates did not know, and much less cared. The course of their ship was slightly altered, and she was run direct for the stranger.

"Gather, men, forward, and stand ready to board. Be ready with the grappling-irons, and cast as soon as we fetch alongside. All hands to your duty!" shouted Morgan, as the vessels rapidly approached each other.

The men needed no urging, and, as soon as the distance was sufficient, the grapplings were cast, and the ship swung side and side with the Spaniard. They had scarcely touched before the buccaneers swarmed his deck, and the fight commenced. In the mean while the other ships had been overhauled by the remaining vessel, and they being much smaller than the one Morgan commanded, attacked him in unison, on either side.

"Down with them, men; we want no more captives!"

And well was the order obeyed. The gray-haired man who was returning to the loving embrace of his children—the loving wife, who, with fond hopes of soon clasping her

long absent husband—the fair young girl, just expanding into womanhood, who, with disheveled hair, clasped hands and streaming eyes, asked for mercy in a voice that would have checked the uplifted arm of a demon—all! all went down beneath the weapons of that truly demon crew.

In half an hour from the time the vessels ranged alongside, not a living soul of their former company was alive. The work of inspecting their cargoes was attended to, and, as they were mostly laden with too heavy and useless a cargo for the pirates to care for, only the most valuable parts were transferred. The ships were then scuttled, and the vessels of the buccaneers filled away on the homeward stretch.

As Isabel was the only woman in the place, the faithful Scotchman had been assigned the task of waiting on her. This he attended to with the same thoughtful care bestowed on Seymore. His stated visits were her only joy, for he would tell her of Edward, and hint the hopes each felt of soon effecting their escape. Still, with these, which were to her rays of sunshine breaking through the dark cloud that seemed to hang around her, she felt an inward dread of what might happen. Morgan had visited her, and, though he did not directly inform her of his purposes, she did not fail to be unfavorably impressed, and her soul was racked with anxiety for not only her own welfare, but also for that of Edward. Donald usually would find her in tears, and would, by his rude speech, attempt to soothe her.

“Ye maunna take on so, my bonnie lass; ’twill do na good; the laddy bears himsel’ like a bauld man; but if I suld tell him o’ the way ye sorrow, he’d be na good his ain sel’.”

“Oh! you must not tell him, Donald, you must not tell him of my weakness. But I can not help giving way at times. If there was but one, only one woman on this island, I should be able to find consolation. It is horrible to think myself the only female, and exposed to the bidding of these awful men,” she replied.

“But ye shall na be scaithed, leddy, while Donald’s got an arm to help ye.”

“I know it, Donald; I know you are the friend of both of us, and if we ever reach my home again you shall be well remembered.”

"I ken so, lassie, but ye maunna think o' that; I'll do a' I can for ye baith, so dinna gie way to sorrow, 'twill do na good."

"I will try and not do so in future, though I am but a woman, after all."

"I'll gang now to see the young man. Shall I gie him yer loo?" he asked, with a smile.

"Yes, Donald; tell him that I love him more dearly day by day, and pray that we may soon be released," she answered unhesitatingly.

He bade her a cheerful good-night, and left the room.

CHAPTER VI.

A SWIM FOR LIFE. MORGAN'S STORY.

At an early hour the ensuing morning, Seymore was roused from a heavy slumber and ushered into the presence of the chieftain. He found him dressed with the same scrupulous care as on the previous day. The room evidently consisted of one of his private apartments, and the furniture and hangings were of the most costly kind. It was an abode fit for an Oriental monarch.

"Are you ready to enter the lists this morning?" he asked of the young man.

"You have reference, I suppose, to the proposition you made, which was, if I succeeded in out-swimming the man you should choose, my work should be lightened?"

"You are right."

"I will accept, as I before said, and the sooner it is decided the better or worse for me."

"It may seem to you that the proposition is absurd; but we are fond of amusement, and, as the monotony of our island life affords none, we resort to trials of skill and strength as a pastime. The men are all on board the ships by this time to witness your prowess, so, with your permission, we will not keep them waiting longer."

They left the room, and proceeded to the shore. Here a boat was in readiness, which soon conveyed them to the ship.

At the distance of perhaps two hundred yards was anchored a boat, around which, he was informed, they were to swim. He ran his eye round on the men to discover, if possible, the person of his antagonist, but none of them appeared to be making ready; he therefore inferred that he was below.

"You will find in my cabin some light articles of clothing, which you had better substitute for those you have on. The sun is intensely hot, and many of my men have experienced bad effects from going into the water without some slight covering," said Morgan.

The young man repaired below. Selecting a light pair of duck trowsers, he quickly disrobed and put them on.

"I would advise you to wear this shirt," said Morgan.

"I have all I wish on—that would hinder the free use of my arms, when wet."

Before ascending to the deck, the buccaneer placed a bottle of wine before the young man, and motioned him to help himself, which he did. When they reached the deck, Seymore found the men had selected sights for themselves in almost every part of the vessel, and, standing in the shade of the mainmast, was his antagonist. Seymore was by no means a small man in stature, yet, in comparison with the brawny pirate, he seemed small.

"That is no common man you have to contend with," remarked the buccaneer, noticing the astonished look on the young man's face.

"I should say so," he simply replied.

"Are you ready, Jack?" asked Morgan.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Now what you each have to do is simply this: you are both to strain every nerve to come off conqueror. Now start!"

In quick succession they jumped off the sprit-sail yard, the pirate leading. Seymore rose to the surface quickly, and struck out for the boat in long, steady strokes. The pirate adopted quite another plan, for he swam as long under water as possible, and, when he rose, was some distance in advance of his antagonist.

"He swims well," remarked Morgan to his lieutenant.

"Indeed he does, sir, and if Jack is not careful he will find himself defeated."

"See! he gains on him every stroke," again said the chieftain, after a moment's pause. "I'll lay two to one that the young man wins."

"For the sake of making it more interesting I'll take your bet, and pay, if I lose, with my share of the gains we take in the next ship."

"Very good; I will stand you," replied Morgan, smiling.

At this moment one of the men cried out in frightened tones:

"A shark! a shark!"

"Where, man, where?" eagerly asked Morgan.

"Right off their starboard quarter!"

He looked, and to his horror saw the dorsal fin of a very large shark, though, from its sluggish movements, it appeared not to have as yet noticed the swimmers.

"Come back, for God's sake!" he fairly yelled; then adding, "Lay aft and lower the cutter down—quick, for your lives!"

The voice of the buccaneer had reached the men, who immediately turned and rapidly commenced making their way back to the ship, not swimming as they had been, but using what by the French is termed the *la brasse* way, or 'hand over hand,' in English. Seymore was now in advance, and the water foamed past him in his struggle, not now for mastery, but for life.

"Strike out, men, for your lives! Swim, for God's sake, swim! He sees you now—he is after you! Pull her to them, lads, pull her under, but pull her up before that shark gets them!" shouted Morgan, as he leaped into the cutter.

The men jerked themselves back on the oars till they cracked again, and every moment brought them nearer to the now nearly exhausted men.

Oh, what agony that moment brought to the two men. Seymore seemed to think of every thing at the same time. Scenes that had long been forgotten came rushing through his brain, and his life, from early boyhood, passed in a second of time before him. Every moment he fancied he heard the rush made by the shark through the waters, or felt the touch of the pilot-fish guiding the monster to his prey. The heavy breathings of the pirate met his ear, but he kept on, straining

every nerve to reach the boat. At length it was reached, and he was lifted in. As he turned to see how near his companion was, he saw him leap suddenly half out of the water, utter a sharp cry of pain, then sink from view, while the tail of a fish flapped for a moment in sight, then also disappeared. The boat shot rapidly to the spot, but, save the blood which stained the water for yards around, nothing was seen.

"Poor Jack! it's all over with you!" exclaimed Morgan. Then, turning to the men, he ordered them to pull for the ship.

Seymore was allowed to rest himself, and then again repaired to the room of the chieftain. He had been allowed, by the popular vote of the men, to be free from hard labor although the race had terminated in the manner we have described.

"I promised you," said Morgan, as they seated themselves, "that I would tell you why the mind of man can be influenced by circumstances, so as to entirely change its native character."

"You did," answered Seymore.

"Yesterday you said, after giving your reasons why you would not join our brotherhood, that *nothing* would cause you to swerve from them."

"And nothing would."

"You evidently do not know yourself."

"I should think I was the best judge of my own nature, and I again repeat, without hesitation, nothing would."

He spoke with so determined a tone that the chieftain gazed on him a moment without reply. He then arose, and turning to a heavy case of drawers, unlocked them, removing a large bundle, from the ends of which the young man noticed what he thought was an Indian bow. Having placed it on a table close by his side, he again seated himself, though, from his heavy breathings, and the rapid change of color that came and went on his countenance, it was evident some deep emotion was awakened by the sight of that package. He rested his head on his hand, and for some minutes remained silent. When he looked up his face was as calm as usual.

"I have said you do not know yourself; I again repeat it;

and, mark you, I say further, events *could* change the whole tenor of *your* actions."

"I will not argue the point. I am positive on the subject."

"I thought at one time as you do, and I am altered, fearfully altered in *my* views. But, without further comment, I will commence the story I intended to communicate. I will merely say I was born in England, and that my parents allowed me all the advantages our village at that time afforded in acquiring a good education. After learning all that could there be taught me—I was an apt scholar—I was placed under the charge of the curate of our parish, who, entertaining a personal friendship for me, took particular pains to instruct me in all the branches of study with which he was acquainted. In this way I passed my boyhood, and never, for a moment, supposed that I would ever be what I now am. My nature was gentleness itself, and I would even dip out with my finger the fly that had flown into some vessel of water, and with my breath, or by placing it in the sunlight, warm it back to life again. This trait of character, which would not allow me wantonly to tread upon even an ant-hill, soon gave me the epithet of 'the humane boy' by my school-fellows. I remember the first tale that I ever read, of the bloody deeds of pirates, and how my soul revolted at the idea of men imbuing their hands in human blood. Do I mind it now? Do I recoil from striking at my feet and extinguishing the life of my fellow-being? Do I feel any remorse? Does conscience bid me, with its silent voice, to stay my hand? Feeling!—why, young man, I have no more of that than have these rocky cliffs; and, as for *conscience*, I laugh at the bare mention of the word. I am as the drunkard, whose insatiate appetite longs for the stimulating fluid; my soul will not be appeased without the constant flow of Spanish blood. Oh! curse them, for the being they have made me!"

He abruptly paused, and the expression of his face was truly hideous. He rose and paced the floor, and Seymore, though he longed to speak, felt his tongue tied by the manner of the pirate. At length he seated himself, and his face showed but few traces of that storm of passion.

"Let me proceed, although I find it hard to converse on a theme that is so painful to me without manifesting emotion

When I arrived at manhood, I expressed a desire to follow the sea. This my parents opposed, but I would not listen to them; and, having heard much of the South American continent, together with the riches it contained, I embarked on board a vessel bound for some port in Mexico—the name I have forgotten. Our voyage was a pleasant one, and all were in high hopes of soon arriving at their destined port, when we were overtaken by a gale which increased to a hurricane, and the ship went down with all on board except myself. I have a faint recollection of clinging to a spar, by which I reached the shore. When I awoke to consciousness, I found myself stretched upon a bed of the softest furs, and in a room whose nature, at first, I was puzzled to make out. The walls were hung round with signs of Indian life, and yet there was an air of neatness pervading every part that made me feel convinced I was in charge of some one who had seen something of civilized life. As I lay speculating and wondering, I heard a light footfall, and, raising my head slightly, saw a being of such perfectness that I thought her an angel."

The darkening shadow again flitted across his face, and his voice trembled with emotion as he continued:

"She approached my side, and, gently placing her hand on my throbbing temples, forced my head back on its pillow, while, in a voice of thrilling sweetness—"

He paused—started—clasped his hands as in an attitude of prayer—then assumed the attitude of one listening to a far-off call. He listened but a moment, then slowly, as it were, came back to his real life again.

"Young man, I hear that voice continually ringing in my ear. When I stand on board my ship and listen to the roar of the angry waves, or as the fierce winds sigh and moan through the rigging, I hear it then. It goads me on in battle; it nerves my arm; it hardens my heart; it is my life—'tis all I live for; and when the shades of night come on, when nature is hushed, and the sea-fowl has sought her rocky perch, I feel that gentle hand press back my head upon its pillow, and that voice sings me to sleep with strains far sweeter than the air-notes of the lullaby of the mother over her first-born."

He buried his face in his hands, and his muscular frame shook like an aspen leaf.

"I am but a man," he continued, "and my emotions will give themselves utterance. Oh! may you never experience what I have. I was saying her voice bade me not to attempt to rise. 'Why not?' I asked. She replied, 'There is not a word nor an action but is treasured here.'" He placed his hand on his heart as he spoke. "'The lights and shades of many a sun have passed since the pale-face was brought bleeding from the shore. We laid him here, and here I have watched for one whole moon by his side. He must not move or he will go back to darkness again.' I thanked her, and, languidly closing my eyes, soon slumbered. It was not long before I was sufficiently recovered to leave my room, and in a month was as strong as ever. One evening I had wandered to the summit of a cliff, and was gazing out on the ocean, thinking it was time for me to make my way to some port and ship for home. That I loved this child of nature I need not inform you, for you have already so inferred; but I feared I could not wed her, because she belonged to a tribe who refused to intermarry with any save their own members. I had risen to retrace my steps, for the spray of the water rose like a veil to where I stood, when the sound of footsteps reached my ear, and the form of Atala—for so she was named—appeared. 'My pale friend must not sit here in the damp air,' she said. I felt a resistless power that I strove in vain to check, urging me on, and finally yielding, I took her hand in mine, and poured in her willing ear the story of my love. She listened without interrupting me, and, as I ceased speaking, freely confessed how dear I was to her, but mentioned the difficulties we would have to contend with. I laughed at them—love overleaps all bounds—and spoke of the happy days to come. I renounced home, country, all for her, and lived but in her smiles. An occurrence happened which I turned to my advantage. The Spaniards had made an inroad on one of their towns, for the sake of plunder, and, finding none—for their coming was known and the Indians had hid their treasures—cruelly tortured several of the inhabitants to compel them to disclose the hiding-place. This fired my impulsive nature, and exciting, by my voice and action, a large number, they allowed me to lead them against their enemies, who had not yet arrived at their boats. We made

the attack with so much violence that they were completely routed, and a large number slain on both sides. I was now a chief among them, and gladly they gave me the maiden for my wife. We were married, and for two years—alas! how soon they passed!—we lived for each other. A little child was born to us, and between it and my wife I shared my affection. Mother, father, all of my kindred were lost beneath the torrent of my love. I lived but for them—I cared but for them—they were my all. At length some business of the tribe called me to a distance. I was to be gone about ten days. Young man, I shall never forget the last time I was with them, if I live till my hair is as white as the hoary frosts of winter. It had been arranged, as the business was urgent, that we should start that very night, and, loth as I was to go, I was forced to yield, owing to the station I filled, that of chief of the party. The sun had just reclined under the purple hills of the west, leaving a golden streak here and there across the blue sky, as, with my child on my lap, and my wife by my side, we sat silently gazing on the scene, too full of happiness to speak. Long did we sit, till the twilight, deepening into darkness, warned me it was time to start. Rising, I kissed the little one, and, drawing Atala to my heart a moment, turned and hurried away. I will not mention what transpired during my absence, but briefly tell you what I found on my return. Arriving at the foot of the hill, on which the town was built, I rapidly ascended it on the morning of my arrival. No sound could I hear, and the stillness seemed to impress me with a horrid dread that something had occurred. I flew rather than ran toward my dwelling—it was a rude one, yet to me it was a palace. I reached the door. No sound met my ear, no pattering of little feet, no loving embrace—oh, God! no, no, none of these; but there was a sight that froze my blood, that checked its current. There, locked in the embrace of death, lay wife and child!—wife and child, did I say?—that does not express my feelings. No, young man, there, in their gore, lay all my very life, my better nature. I had left that house a man, I returned an infuriated demon. I remember falling on their bodies, and, when next I rose, I was what you now see me. It seemed like a horrid dream, or else some specter vision that I saw

I shouted in their senseless ears; I gazed down into their stony eyes; I kissed their clammy lips; but no look, no answer did they make. I was becoming mad. Oh, that I had, for then, in my maniac mind, they would have been always with me. At length the torrent of my feelings passed away, and, calmly kneeling by them, I swore an oath so deep, so black, so awful that I felt my soul take hold on hell as I uttered it; but I took it, and well have I kept it, and shall still, till I am laid in death. Then may I see those loved ones through my spirit's eye, for I shall never meet them. The Spaniards did commit the murder, the Spaniards have felt my vengeance."

He rose as he uttered the remark, and, taking the bundle, carefully untied the strings, exhibiting to the young man a full Indian costume usually worn by a squaw, together with the garments of a child. Besides these there were a number of trinkets, a quiver of arrows, and a light bow. The clothes were darkly stained with blood, and rent in numerous places, as if torn by violence. Long and earnestly did the buccaneer gaze on them, and the mingled emotions of love and hate that were passing within, Seymore could trace by their workings on his face. At last overcoming them, and forcing his voice to calmness, he again addressed his listener:

"After taking my oath, I rose to my feet, and, calling the remnant of the tribe around me, entered upon the duty of consigning their bodies to the earth. These clothes I removed with my own hands, and have carefully preserved. There are moments when I tire of my work, but a glance at these is all that is required to force me on. I need but close my eyes, and I see the scene afresh. I see them in my dreams; I see them in my waking moments; I see them now as my eye rests on these bloody mementoes; and when the breath leaves my body, and when my eye takes its last look on earth, they will be standing before me, hand in hand, the mother and the child. Yes, Atala, my wife, my darling, here do I again renew my oath, and never shall my hand withhold the stroke of death from a Spaniard. After laying them to rest, I wandered forth, not knowing or caring where I went, until I arrived at the island of St. Domingo. There I heard of this organization of men, and likewise that they warred with

bitter hate against the very nation I had sworn to never spare. I bought, with the last farthing I possessed, a small sail-boat, and, with two others who wished to join them, set sail for this island. What remains is quickly told. They wanted a leader; I was the very man for them; I offered, was accepted, and am now Henry Morgan, the chieftain of the Brethren of the Coast."

He retied the clothes, and placing them again in the drawer, locked it, and, after hurriedly walking the floor several times, abruptly asked:

"Well, young man, what do you think of Henry Morgan now?"

"As one whose story has curdled the blood within my veins," answered Seymore, with a shudder.

"And do you still think that events can not change the entire actions of a man's life, taking from his breast a heart of flesh and blood, and substituting one that laughs to scorn the cry of mercy?"

"Events, I admit, are strong agents; but they should be under the surveillance of reason."

"Reason! Pooh, you talk like a child. Come, I will make the case come home to yourself. You love that Spanish lady?"

"I do."

"And would protect her life?"

"I would."

"Even to the sacrifice of **your own**?"

"Yes."

"Supposing she was killed—what then?"

"I should revenge her death."

"Even to taking the life of the man or men who committed the deed—that is, if you love with your entire being?"

"I most certainly would."

"Need I say more? Have not you admitted *all* that but a moment ago you proposed to hold under surveillance?"

"But I should not war against a nation on account of the acts committed by a few," replied the young man, after a moment's silence.

"Nor would I, had I known who slew my wife and child, then my revenge would have been centered on them only;

but when a man suffers as I have, it is cause enough to war against a nation who are, of themselves, the very fathers of cruelties. Mine is by no means an isolated case. Read of the cruelties practiced by them from the very onset of their conquest of Mexico up to the present day, and then defend them, as a *nation*, if you can. I had but one fond hope in life, and yet they stopped not in their bloody work to question what the result would be in destroying it. No, no, talk not to me of mercy to a Spaniard. I have marked out my course, and with remorseless energy I will follow it to the bitter end."

Seymore saw that argument would be useless with a man of so much firmness. He asked himself how it would be were Isabel destroyed under like circumstances, and could but feel that the buccaneer's career had extenuating circumstances, and that his awful crimes were tempered by their awful provocation.

"I feel for you, Morgan, and did your occupation of life consist of a more lawful calling, would be your friend; but I can not, as I have said, join your brotherhood. I would wish to know finally the disposition you intend to make of me and the lady; you have named it before, but I hope have not given your decided answer. There is a favor I would ask of you as my countryman?"

"Ask, and if it lays within my power I will grant it."

"Give the girl her freedom, and then do with me as you will."

"I *can not* grant it. If it *was* within my power I might humor you; but, did I set her at liberty to leave this island, my men would murmur, and the great object of our organization would be violated. Never, to my knowledge, has a single human being left here to communicate what he has seen, and never shall one leave while I live to prevent it. The girl has but two decisions to choose from—either to live with one of my men, or to *die*."

This was uttered slowly, distinctly, commandingly. Seymore read in it his doom. To the Scotchman he now looked for the consummation of their scheme to escape—the last hope of salvation.

"Is this decision final?"

"It is," was the emphatic reply.

"With me, then—what is my lot?"

"You have been informed of it; you are our *slave*."

"Be it so, I submit."

"Remember, that no second choice will be allowed you when once you give your final answer. Choose, then: our brother or our slave?"

"I have chosen—your slave."

"Are you aware how long a slave works with us? I mean by that, not as to the period, for that embraces life, but to the number of days that constitute a week?"

"I suppose the allotted time, six days."

"You are wrong; with us one day is as another."

"And yet you offer prayer before embarking on an expedition, and return thanks upon your safe arrival home."

"We most certainly do, and do not disregard the seventh day," replied Morgan, smiling. "*Our* commandments read: 'Six days shalt thou work, and on the seventh shalt thou carry the produce of thy labor to the shore,'" replied the buccaneer, in a voice in which scorn and authority were blended.

He abruptly put an end to the conversation by rising, and, summoning Donald, ordered the young man back to his dungeon.

CHAPTER VII.

A SCOTCHMAN'S WAY OF OBEYING ORDERS.

THE ship that had been captured had undergone an entire alteration, so that she appeared a different vessel. Her deck had been cut down, and each side pierced by six port-holes. Her spars had been replaced by larger ones, and her masts given more "rake." She was now not only the largest one of the fleet, but her sailing qualities having been thoroughly tested, it was found that she was as fast as all others but one. The pirates' fleet consisted of twenty-eight sail, though, at that time, the number of men on the island was only sufficient to man twenty of them. Their numbers were increasing so

rapidly, that two years from the date of our story, it may here be said, they were in command of over forty ships, and a full crew for each.

Before the capture of the vessel in which Seymore and Isabel were passengers, Morgan had matured a plan of attacking Porto Bello, which he now intended carrying into execution. He directed that seventeen ships, with a force of twelve hundred men, should be instantly made ready to sail at a moment's notice; then summoning the Scotchman to his presence, he gave him his orders concerning the charge of the lady Isabel and Edward.

"Donald," he said, "I shall be absent for some time, and intend leaving you on shore. To your charge I give the keeping of the young Englishman, and the Spanish girl. What you do with her I care not, but him I wish well provided for."

"I suld like weel to gang wi' ye, sir," answered the Scotchman.

"I do not doubt you in the least, but you must obey orders and remain," replied Morgan.

"Ye want the laddy keped at work, dinna ye?"

"Yes, and mind, you will have to answer to me on my return if aught befalls him."

"Dinna fear, sir, I'll ha' gude watch o' him!"

"I dare tell you, that for this young man I have taking a liking, and would gladly see him one of our number. He is both brave and intelligent, and would make an excellent officer for me. There is but one cause of hindrance in the way, and with it removed, I think he would join us."

"Ye ha' only to name it, and I'se ha' it removed," remarked Donald, quietly.

"If that girl could be quietly dropped from some cliff *by accident*, or, you should happen to carelessly handle a pistol in her presence and it *chanced* to explode, or some unforeseen event of the kind that would dispose of her, then I think his only scruple would be removed—you understand me?" asked the chieftain, with as little feeling manifested in his tone.

"I ken yer meaning," answered the Scotchman, in his quiet way, without showing the feelings the diabolical hints of Morgan had caused him. "I ken yer meaning weel, sir, and ye shall na see the lass when ye cam back, I hope."

"Very well; in your hands I leave her fate."

Morgan then left the room, and Donald followed, shaking his head and muttering to himself

"Ye shall na see the lass, or laddy, nor my ain sel' either, by the time ye cam back, ye bloody skellum."

The week spoken of by the Scotchman in which he hoped to effect an entrance into the cave by means of the outer passage that had been walled up, was rapidly extending into a month. In the first place, he found that age had hardened the cement to such a degree, that it required more time and labor than he at first supposed, and the wall itself was much thicker than he imagined it, being built heavy at the base, and gradually tapering toward the top. The distance he had thus far quarried was about ten feet, and yet the blows he struck were but faintly heard by the imprisoned youth. Seymore was obliged to labor during the day; still, when night came, he would willingly have helped remove the barrier to his freedom had he been allowed. The Scotchman would not allow him to work from within, so he slept nightly to give a needed rest to his weary limbs. It was the day previous to the departure of the chieftain, and Seymore, who now was under the entire control of Donald, had been sent to the north-west part of the island to cut and prepare some timbers that were needed to repair the wide landing at the foot of the stairway. The day had half passed, and the young man had seated himself for a moment, when his friend came suddenly upon him. Since the interview Donald had with Morgan, no time had been given him to communicate what had been said to the latter. The young man plainly saw something unusual had occurred, for his companion's face was radiant with pleasure.

"Donald, you seem pleased," he said.

"I am," replied the Scotchman, breaking into a low laugh.

"It must be something that concerns our welfare—what is it?"

"Ye see, laddy, Morgan is ganging off, and he has bid me stay wi' ye. He little kens the man he's gien the charge o' ye, or he wid na feel so weel about it. He told me to be careful of ye, and thinks when he comes back ye will na mind to join the brothers."

"What are his grounds for thinking so? I gave him the other day as decided an answer to that as man could, I am sure."

"Ay, laddy, but I ha' not told ye a' he said to me."

"Pray, then, tell it me forthwith."

"He bade me, as I said, to ha' a watch o' ye, and told me what to do wi' the lass—"

"And what of her?" asked the young man, rising hastily from his seat.

"Na, ye maunna get angry," replied his companion, soothingly; "na scaith will cam to she. He told me to throw her frae the cliff, or shoot her wi' me pistol, or do what I wid wi' her so she did but die. But, I winna do it, lad; I winna do it," he hurriedly added, as he saw that Seymore was about to speak.

"I do not for one moment think you would, Donald; but, he really told you so?"

"Ay, laddy, and he told me mair."

"Tell me all he said, the very worst."

"He said that, when ye found the lassie had died, ye wid come over to the band, and he wid make ye his officer—but ye dinna ken he's ganging awa' frae here to Porto Bello?"

"Indeed, I did not; but when?"

"On the morrow."

"And you—"

"Will stay on shore wi' ye."

"And is not that well for the success of our plan?"

"Ay, laddy, we'se do better wi' him gone."

"I think so, Donald."

The conversation was dropped, and Donald spreading before the young man the repast he had brought, he seated himself, and ate heartily, for his morning's work had given him a good appetite. After he had finished, he rose, and asked his companion how he became an inhabitant of the island. From the first moment of his arrival he had wished to ask this question, but neither time nor opportunity had been given him. The Scotchman's history was in substance as follows:

He was born in the north part of Scotland, and prided himself in being a Highlander. For many years of his life, he had been employed among his native hills, but at last tiring

of climbing their rocky heights, he had made his way to the Frith of Forth, and shipped for the coast of Spain. Arriving there, he left the vessel, and, after staying on shore till, sailor-like, all his money was expended, or, as an "old salt" would express it, "not a shot left in the locker," he embarked for the West Indies. Arriving off the island of Tortuga, the vessel was discovered and chased by the pirates, and, although it blew a six-knot breeze, and every stitch of canvas set that would draw, they were overtaken, and all the crew put to the sword excepting himself and two others, who were countrymen of his; they were allowed to live owing to their nativity, and by promising to join the band. From the first he had recoiled at the mode of life he now was obliged to follow, and, together with his two companions, determined to escape as soon as the chance offered; but, they had been slain in an engagement, and he had not yet met with a favorable opportunity. When Morgan communicated to him his intentions concerning Edward, he felt almost beside himself with joy, though he carefully refrained from letting his chieftain see it, knowing the consequences that would inevitably follow.

This was the brief history he communicated to Seymore, who could but feel that a kind Providence had interposed to work out some good in Donald's preservation.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EXPEDITION AGAINST PORTO BELLO.

THE crews of the several vessels that had been ordered in readiness were on board their respective ships, waiting the approach of their commander, who was rapidly nearing his vessel.

Morgan had established as strict order on board his ships as could be found on a man-of-war of any country. He had transferred the stern discipline of the British navy to the men under his command. The well-scraped decks; the burnished binnacles; the neatly arranged muskets that stood lashed in

their rack abaft the main-mast; the precision with which every rope was coiled under her bulwarks, showed the rigid order which controlled the entire organization on sea as well as on land.

The piercing whistle of the boatswain on board the commander's vessel, and the echoing answers of those on each of the other ships, with the hoarse cry of—"All hands on deck, ahoy!" soon brought into immediate activity their several crews.

The steady tramp of numerous feet, interspersed with a verse of some wild sea song, the hurried orders, the cheerful response, told the moment of starting had arrived. The anchor was hove short; the sails loosed and sheeted home; the forward yards braced aback, and the after yards filled away; the helm given sheer enough for the anchor to be tripped and then catted; the jib-sheet hauled to windward; and, as the vessels paid beautifully off, the yards were trimmed fore and aft, and the fleet stood gracefully out of the harbor.

After standing out to sea for some five miles their course was changed. Their nearest way would have been to beat to the southward as far as the eastern part of Hayti, then through the Mona passage into the Caribbean sea. But the buccaneer, in the hope of falling in with some homeward-bound Spanish vessel, laid his course along the north shores of the Bahama islands to the Gulf stream, then round the Pine islands off the point of Florida, and so south through the Gulf of Mexico to their destined port.

"A fine breeze we have got to start by," remarked the lieutenant, who had been watching the bubbles glide swiftly past the vessel's side; "a fine breeze, sir, and if it only holds we'll make a quick run."

"Yes, and I hope it will last; but we have plenty of time, and there is nothing to hurry us," carelessly replied Morgan.

"Have you implicit confidence in that Scotchman?" inquired the officer, abruptly, after a moment's pause.

"I have; but why do you ask?"

"Why, sir, when we captured that Spaniard I saw Donald whisper to the young man some words which appeared to please both amazingly. I thought I would say nothing to

you about the circumstance until I was convinced by further actions, on his part, that I was right. Ever since we returned from our last cruise I have watched him closely, but to no avail. Either my suspicions are wrong, or else he has noticed I suspected him and has been careful."

"You did very wrong in not telling me before, though I am convinced we have not a more faithful follower than that Scotchman."

"I hope so, and yet I feel doubts concerning him; but time will show whether or not they are correct."

"If, on my return, I find you are right, a knife's point will soon set him beyond further suspicion. But we have more weighty matters on hand, so we will say no more about him."

The dog-watch had but just been set on the morning of the third day, and the men gone to mess, when the look-out at the mast-head reported a sail in sight. All was instant activity.

"Where away?" shouted Morgan, as he reached the deck.

"On the lee bow!"

"What do you make her out?"

"She's a large ship, I should say, sir!"

"What sails do you see?"

"I can make them out as low as the top-gallant. She carries royals and is rigged large."

"Signal to one of our large ships to edge within hail," he said, turning to his lieutenant.

The flag was run to the gaff bearing the initial letter of the vessel desired, and it had scarcely unrolled before the ship was seen approaching. When she was within hail the buccaneer gave the required orders, and she drew out from the fleet, crowding all sail in pursuit of what evidently proved a tartar, for she nor any of her crew were ever again seen by the pirates.

In due course of time Porto Bello was reached, and the fleet stood off and on the harbor, while a boat was ordered to the shore.

"Unlash the larboard quarter boat and lower away! Lively, men!" said the lieutenant, who had been assigned the office of demanding the unconditional surrender of the place. The men sprung to their duty, and the boat was quickly

lowered and unhooked. "Now give way, my hearties!" exclaimed the officer, as he seated himself in the stern-sheets.

The boat sped swiftly on its way, till within a short distance of the place, when it was suddenly brought to a stand-still by the report of a cannon, and a ball flew whizzing over their heads.

"If that's the reception they intend giving us at the start, we might as well bout ship and make no further parley. I'll show them a white flag and see what good that will do," he remarked, as he extended a handkerchief on a boat-hook and flung it to the breeze. Then giving the order to again proceed, they reached the town without further molestation.

"Well, sir, what do you mean by that flag, and what is that fleet doing off the mouth of our harbor?" asked the commander of the place, in precise, soldier-like tones.

"I am here to demand the unconditional surrender of this town, in the name of Henry Morgan, the chieftain of the Brethren of the Coast!" answered the lieutenant, in an equally haughty voice.

This announcement caused immediate consternation among those who heard it. Through the town it spread like wild-fire, that the dreaded buccaneers were about to lay the place in ashes, and the shore was soon lined with human beings gazing with fear at the vessels.

"Are you aware that a flag of truce is not respected by me, or any other commander of a fortified town, when it is sent by pirates?" asked the Governor.

"We have never stopped to inquire about the matter, nor am I here now to listen to or answer such questions."

"Are you also aware that I would think not twice in taking your life if I so willed it?" he again asked, not taking notice of the haughty tone and manner of the pirate.

"You dare not, if you would, for it would be revenged by the spilling of every drop of blood that now runs through the veins of the inhabitants of this town," replied the officer, though the cool, determined manner of the other caused him to feel alarmed for his safety.

"Answer me. Suppose I refuse to acquiesce with your leader's commands—what then?"

"We shall compel you."

"And if we resist you?"

"We are armed with sufficient force to overpower you."

"And if you are allowed to return to your vessel, and report my answer, will not you make one of the attacking party?"

"I—that is, if I am ordered I shall be compelled to obey."

He would have spoken more definitely, but there was something in the Governor's manner that caused him to frame his answer in a way that would make it appear as if he was compelled, and not of himself anxious; though, had the choice been left to himself, he would certainly not have remained on board the ship while his companions were plundering the town.

"If I yield to your command—for with that fleet yonder it certainly is not a request—what terms do you offer?"

"Your lives only."

"You are very liberal, but that is not inducement enough; you offer nothing else?"

"I do not."

"If you were Morgan, or did you have the control of the proposed attack, would you not feel disposed to be more lenient? Would you not allow us to remove with half our *rich* treasures, and leave you master of the rest?"

"If I were Morgan, I should not bicker with you one moment longer; but, if you did not yield immediately, I would send a ball through your heart. Half your treasures! No, the whole or none. Might makes right, and we know how to enforce the maxim."

"Let your men regain their boat, and I will give them the answer to carry back to your leader."

The officer gave the order, and then stood waiting.

"Señor will also please re-enter his boat," requested the Governor. "You have asked whether I will surrender this town," he resumed, as the lieutenant did as he had requested. "Now take my answer. Let your men carry it, for *you* never can."

As he finished speaking, he drew a pistol from his belt, and, aiming it full at the pirate's head, fired. The man uttered not a word, but fell in the boat, dead.

"Away with you! I give ten minutes for you to get

beyond the reach of our guns. Away, and take the body of that villain as my answer to your chieftain."

The boat's crew were too much awed by the daring action and stern voice of the Governor to even murmur a reply. They jerked back on their oars, and, ere the time allotted, were far out of the harbor.

It would be impossible to describe the rage of Morgan as the boat reached the ship and he was informed of the Governor's manner, and shown the body of his officer. He lost entire control of himself, and the curses he uttered were too horrid to mention. His men shrunk from him in fear, nor did they attempt to speak until his anger had somewhat abated.

"Run up the signal for a boat to come from every ship!" he at last commanded.

"It was done, and his officers soon gathered around him, to whom he briefly told what had occurred.

"And now," he said, at the conclusion, "the man that spares one Spanish life, that man will I, with my own hands, kill. You each know my instructions, and woe to you if they are not obeyed to the very letter. That town I shall take if it costs all your lives; and it is governed by a man who will defend it with as much bravery as I intend using in attacking it. Now go!"

They turned and regained their respective vessels, and the fleet then stood in directly for the town.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FALL AND SACK OF PORTO BELLO.

ON the southern point of the harbor, and distant from the town some two miles, jutted a low, sandy point. On this Morgan disembarked his force. It had been his first intention to run in and land immediately at the town; but, upon sounding, he found the water was not of sufficient depth, excepting at one point, and that was protected by the guns

of the citadel. His plan of attack was then changed from an assault by water to one by land. The buccaneer was a man who was as careful of the lives of his followers as he was regardless of those of his enemies. He had been fully informed in regard to the town, its approaches and its defenses, and knew that the town itself was not fortified, but that the citadel was of great strength, and would cost him more lives than he could actually spare to storm it. Morgan was not only a man of great courage, but one of equal sagacity for plotting. Hence, he was soon engaged in inventing some stratagem by which the fort could be taken without too great loss. That his devilish ingenuity was equal to any emergency the sequel will show.

The following morning he arose early. Dressing in his usually careful manner, he ordered fifty of his best men to follow, and started for the town. The bare mention of his name was sufficient to protect him from violence, and the inhabitants fled before him like frightened sheep. Arriving at the gate of the nunnery, he knocked, and, the wicket being opened, the voice of the portress, in trembling tones, asked what he wanted.

"Open, good mother," he replied. "You have nothing to fear. I war on men, not on women."

The door was carefully opened, and he strode in.

"Are you the abbess?" he inquired, his voice instantly changing to its natural tone now that he had effected an entrance.

"I am not, but I will hasten and call her," replied the affrighted woman.

The buccaneer had not long to wait. The door opened, and the stately figure of the lady abbess entered. She was dressed in the somber hue of her order, while round her waist hung the heavy beads and cross of her rosary.

"What business has a man of blood to profane the sanctity of this holy place with his tread?" she inquired, in a solemn voice.

"I come to order, not to be commanded—to question and not to be questioned," replied Morgan, with a mock bow.

"Your name is Henry Morgan—the dreaded buccaneer?" she inquired.

"I am. Have you any thing more to ask?"

"I have heard of your sinful life, and the sisters oft have prayed for you."

"More for the sake of having the accursed lives of their countrymen spared than for any Christian charity toward me," he answered, mockingly.

"You may, unholy man, put whatever construction you please to my words, but we know why we pray, and to whom."

"I have not the least doubt of it, woman;" and then added, sternly, "I come here not to talk of feasts or fasts, prayer or praise, but to command. I am here to lay waste this town—to leave not one stone on another. I am a *feeling* man,"—he smiled at his rude jest—"and wish to spare as many lives of my own men as possible. Of you nuns I intend to make an agent in doing so. To-morrow we shall assault the castle, and, as the Governor and his soldiers would not commit so heinous, so unholy a crime as fire upon you, I intend to—"

"Holy Father!—what?"

"Have the goodness not to interrupt me," he said, in an angry tone. "I was saying, as they would not fire on you, I intend having you plant the ladders for us, and ascend them first. We shall immediately *follow* you."

"Are you a fiend? Do you forget you had a mother, or perhaps some woman who once loved you?"

"Forget!" he thundered, rising from his seat, and striking his clenched fist upon the table. "Forget—would to God I could! But no more of this. Let it suffice, that to-morrow my followers will have the ladders in readiness. See to it that you are ready. I shall station a guard about this place, and if you attempt to effect your escape, your blood be upon your own heads."

He rose as he spoke and walked toward the door.

"Stay!" she cried. "Promise me that if we obey your orders, we shall have our lives and honor protected."

"I shall promise nothing."

She essayed to speak, but he motioned her to silence, and left the room.

At the outer door he met his men, to whom he gave orders not to allow any person to either leave or approach the

place during the night. Then, selecting a small escort, he wended his way back to his followers.

Early the following morning all was stir and bustle within the pirates' camp. At length the men were under arms, and the line of march began. When they reached the nunnery, a halt was ordered, and Morgan entered the place. He was a short time absent, and, when he reappeared, was followed by the entire number of the affrighted nuns. They were compelled to carry the ladders, and proceed in front, forced on by blows dealt them with no gentle hand.

Morgan had planned this cruel device, knowing the holy reverence which the Spaniards entertained for these women.

As the trembling nuns planted the ladders and commenced the ascent, urged on by the naked sabers behind them, the voice of the Governor spoke in distinct tones, first to his men and then to the assailants:

"Resist all who attempt to climb these walls, even to the holy women, if you value your lives. Spare none, for, of what avail would it be to those nuns did we allow them to reach the summit alive? Would not they be sacrificed in common with us by the fiends that follow? They, then, might better meet a speedy death by our own hands than share a fate far worse, and at last be butchered." Turning to the pirates, he added: "Morgan, think not to succeed by the hellish plot you have invented, for we will throw back upon your swords those poor women whom you have compelled to act for you, and wash our hands of their blood."

"Follow me, men!" shouted the chieftain, seeing his plan of no avail. "Follow me! Away with the women, and man the ladders! A thousand pieces to the one who reaches the top first!"

With loud cries the pirates commenced the assault. They wanted no greater inducements than to share in the plunder the place would afford. The helpless nuns were thrust rudely aside, many of them trampled to death under their feet, while others were mercifully granted a quicker death by the sword thrust through their defenseless breasts. Some, with torn garments, made their escape, and secreted themselves until the bloody disaster was accomplished.

Long and desperately did the courageous Governor defend

the place, and fearfully did it tell on the lives of the assailants. Morgan seemed aided by the Evil One, for, though many as were the weapons aimed at him, his wretched life was still secure. The bullet intended for him would find a lodgment in the heart of one of his followers. Numbers at length prevailed, and disputing, inch by inch, the ground they had fought so hard to retain, the defenders were driven back, till, finally, all were either slain on the spot or dashed to pieces on the ground below.

Now came a scene almost too horrid to describe, as the maddened wretches, drunk with blood, and mad with carnage, indiscriminately slew young and old, male and female.

After the work of death had been accomplished, the town was given to plunder. The historic estimate of the amount obtained places the sum at two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, besides a vast quantity of valuable merchandise.

Morgan gave his followers two weeks in which to satiate their appetites in rioting and debauchery, though he himself abstemiously refrained from any species of indulgence.

CHAPTER X.

AN ODD PLAN FOR ESCAPE.

AFTER the departure of Morgan, Donald had been enabled to make more rapid progress in removing the wall of the cave, and but a few inches at length remained between the young man and freedom. The Scotchman had hoped that the watch kept on board the vessels would not have been as strict as when the chieftain was with them, but, for some cause or other, he found it had been doubled. This caused him almost to despair, as it was his intention to leave the island by means of one of the ship's boats. To obtain one without now attracting the attention of the vigilant sentinels, would be impossible. In this frame of mind he sought the young man for counsel, that, by their united efforts some plan might be invented by which their escape could be accomplished.

"Why, Donald, what is the matter!" asked Seymore, as his friend's troubled face came in sight.

"Well, laddy," he replied, "the watch has been doubled on the ships, and I canna see how we are to get a boat. I dinna ken but ye might think o' some plan."

Edward remained without speaking for some time. At length, he asked:

"You told me Morgan gave you instructions to put Isabel out of the way, by throwing her off the cliff or shooting her?"

"I did."

"The pirates, you tell me, are exceedingly superstitious. Do they believe in persons visiting this earth after death?"

"Ay, laddy, they do. It is their only fear."

"How do you know?"

"I ha' heard them tell each ither so, mony a time."

"Then I see no way for it but to invent a ghost, which shall procure us all we need. It is, I feel, the only resource left us. Do you think it can be made at all available?"

"I ken it will, laddy, if ye may invent the way."

The plan of escape first thought of was for Donald to obtain one of the boats by stealth; to hug the shore until he had worked his way far enough out of the harbor to conceal his movements; then to hoist sail, round the point, and land on the south side. There Seymore and the lady were to join him, and the three would then lay their course for the nearest point of Hayti. The latter part of this plan was still to be adhered to, should they be so fortunate as to obtain the boat from the guard.

"Can you conceal the lady until we are ready to start?" asked the young man, after remaining silent for some time.

"Yes," replied Donald.

"Then listen to me. These pirates are taking liberties, now that Morgan is away, and every night that passes they are engaged in carousal. This must be turned to our advantage, and in this way. You must inform Isabel of the part she must play, which will be that of ghost. Since you were instructed by Morgan to kill her, you must this very night visit her, and, after firing your pistol, hastily conceal her. Then appear, for several days after, moody and reserved; the men will notice this and inquire into the cause, which you

will mystify as best you can ; but mind you, tell them that in conformity with the will of their leader, you shot the girl, and that her spirit hovers constantly around, and every night you are obliged to meet her at some distant point. If they doubt you, tell them that, if you are not there at the appointed time, she invariably comes for you ; and, to confirm this, remain some night with them over the appointed hour, and have her appear. This is the main point of my plan. I leave it entirely for you to modify or elaborate as the necessity of the case may require."

"Weel, laddy, if ye are not cunning ! Never fear but that I'll do it weel," replied Donald, highly elated with the scheme.

As it was now nearly night, the young man followed Donald and was incarcerated within the narrow boundaries of his cavern once again. After preparing their evening meal, Donald wended his way toward the room in which Isabel was still confined. She had changed much since, and the pale, sunken cheek told that her confinement was wearing upon her. She smiled as her good keeper entered. Donald felt a pang of remorse that he had not been able to effect her escape before now, and determined that, ere many days, she should be on her way toward home.

"Have you any news, Donald ?" she asked.

"Yes, leddy," he replied. "But ye ha' a part to play !"

"A part to play !—what do you mean ?"

"Ye ken what Morgan told me ?"

"Yes ; you told me of his order to you concerning me."

"Weel, leddy, the young man and I did speak o' it to-day, and we maun gae wa' frae here before he comes back."

"Well—go on."

"Ye maun let the men think I killed ye, and gae wa' wi' me frae here."

"Yes, I understand you so far ; you want to hide me ?"

"Ay, leddy ; and, as the men believe in ghostie things, ye maun appear to them."

He then confided to her the entire plan. She acquiesced in the effort with eagerness. After she had finished her meal, he discharged his pistol, and hurried her away.

"Was that you that fired that pistol ?" inquired one of the bar-baneers of Donald, as he arrived at the outside of the place

"Yes," was the short answer.

"And who, or what, did you fire at?"

"Ye maunna ask me."

"But we all heard it, and the lieutenant wants to know!"

"Weel, if ye maun, ye maun, so I will tell ye."

"Out with it, then; you shake and tremble as if you had the ague."

"And weel I may. Ye ken me weel, Dick, that I never minded to shoot a man, but when I ha' to shoot a woman, I dinna like it."

"Shoot a woman?" exclaimed the man in much surprise. "What woman have you been shooting?"

"The Spanish ledly that we took wi' the young man."

"And who told you to do it?"

"Morgan."

"Then what are you fretting about? You did but obey orders."

"I dinna mind her death, Dick, but her spirit"—he paused and gazed about him, then going close to his comrade said:

"Her spirit will walk at night; I ken it, Dick, I ken it. She looked me so in the e'e."

"Pooh, Donald, I would say you were a coward if I did not know better."

He spoke bravely enough, but it was evident that the manner of his companion had impressed him with dread.

"It will na be she will come to Dick, but me ain sel'."

"What makes you think so?" asked the other, uneasily.

"Oh! if ye had seen the look she gie me as she died, and the voice she spoke to me wi', ye would na forget it till yer dying day."

"What did she say?" asked Dick, becoming more and more uneasy.

"'Meet me,' she said, 'every night at the sma' hour, by the gray rock; I ha' much to tell ye of'."

"And are you going to?"

"I canna help to, if I wid; for she said if I dinna come to her she wid come to I, be it at council, feast, or ship-board. But I maun ha' a boat to go there wi', else she will come to me."

"And you shall have one, or a dozen of them when I am on watch, for I would not meet her for all the ships we have got. But perhaps she will not be so good as her word?"

"Dinna say so, Dick. It is a sin to tempt a ghostie; dinna ye ken she hears what ye say?"

"Do you think so?" said his companion, looking round with a frightened glance.

"Yes, Dick, ye but tempt her to come to ye some night when ye are on watch," replied Donald, solemnly.

This was too much for the man. He turned to hurry hastily

away. The Scotchman gave vent to his feelings by a low laugh, and muttered:

"I ha' scared ye, Dick, to me ain liking. If I can do as weel wi' the rest, we will soon bid ye good-by."

Some time after twelve, Donald stole softly to the rooms, and, looking in, he saw the buccaneers engaged in their carousal. He hurriedly retraced his steps, and waiting till he heard two bells struck on board the ship, hurried to the shore. Freely sprinkling his hair and clothes with sea-water, and bedaubing his boots with mud, he disarranged his toilet as if he had been at some distance, and ascending the cliff hurried toward the rendezvous.

One of the pirates was busily engaged narrating some sea tale as the Scotchman burst, with affrighted looks, into the room. Hurriedly seizing a glass of grog that had that moment been placed before one of the men, he drank it off at a draught, and sunk upon a seat as if entirely overcome.

"I said so, Dick!" he at length gasped. "I said so. I ha' seen her wi' my ain een."

"What is the matter with the man, is he crazy?" asked the officer Morgan had left in charge of the place.

"Na, sir, I am na crazy," replied Donald; "but I ha' seen her."

"Seen who, you lubberly fool?"

"The leddy, sir; she whom I shot."

"You have been asleep and dreamt it."

"Look at my clothes," he replied, going toward the table, where the drops of water, glistening in the light, might be plainly seen by all. "A man could na get these drops o' spray in his bed, nor these clots o' mud upon his boots. I ha' not dreamt these there."

"Well, tell us where you got them—will you give place to Donald's story, Tom?" he asked the man whose tale Donald's entrance had interrupted.

"That I will," was the answer.

"Here, take a glass of stuff to keep your courage up, and out with what you have seen."

Donald took the proffered liquor, and, after swallowing a little, began, in a deep and mysterious voice, his impromptu story:

"Ye see, lads, I was ordered by our chief, when he sailed, to make away wi' the leddy before he cam hame. Yesterday I thought I might as well do it as wait longer; so when I carried her in supper, I waited till her e'e was turned frae me, and shot her, as I thought, dead. I went to drag away the body, when she opened her e'e and looked on me awhile, and said: 'Donald, ye maun come to see me every night by the gray rock at the sma' hour, for I ha' mony things to tell ye of. If ye dinna, I will come to ye, be it at council, feast or ship-board.'

I could na answer her, lads, but I ken I maun gang, eise she wid cam to me. To-night I went and saw her."

A shudder of dread ran through his fellows, as he paused to let his words have full effect.

"Go on, Donald, go on!" exclaimed the officer, in an excited tone.

"I could na get a boat, so I walked; I winna do it again if she comes to me every night till I die," he said—a not indistinct hint that his companions might have the benefit of seeing the supposed spirit, as well as himself. "I had na been there long, before I thought the sun had risen, it grew so light; and when I looked up, I see the leddy standing close by me. She was dressed in white, and her face shone like the sun; her dark hair hung loose around her shoulders, and the blood fell drop by drop to the rock frae the wound the ball had made in her breast. She slowly raised her arm, and pointing to it a moment, said: 'Donald, ye will rue the day when ye killed me. I ha' done ye nor Morgan na harm, yet ye harmed me. As long ye will cam here every night, na ill will happen ye; but when I ha' come to ye, ye will wish ye never was born.' I could na stand it ony longer, lads, and fainted away. As soon as I cam to, I hurried hame in the plight ye see me. I hope ye will never see her yer ain sel's."

Well did he act his part, while telling his story. Some'owing to the liquor they had drunk, had become intoxicated; but before the Scotchman had finished, were completely sobered by fright.

"You say, Donald, that the spirit of this woman threatened only you with harm if you failed to be at the place on the time appointed?" inquired the officer.

"That was what she told me."

"Then to-morrow night you shall not go; I want to see this spirit myself. If she had appointed a place easier of access, I should not care to see her; but this wanting a boat, is a matter I can not grant until I am convinced you have actually seen what you say you have; then I can allow you the privilege of using one, for I, nor any of the men, care about her presence at midnight."

Donald supplicated with all the eloquence he was master of, but to no avail; the lieutenant remained firm, and with apparent reluctance, he yielded. It must not be supposed that the officer doubted the truth of the story for one moment. The damp locks, the wet garments, the muddy boots, would remove all suspicions were any felt; but the stern discipline of their leader, who punished disobedience by death, made him refuse to yield to the desire of Donald in having the use of a boat, until he was convinced of the truth of the story by himself seeing the apparition.

"Ye will see her, sir," said Donald, positively, "and then ye wid ha' been glad had ye taken my word for it."

"Very well, we shall see," replied the officer; then turning to the man he had addressed as Tom, he bade him finish his story.

Donald remained in the room, and Dick, edging his way to him, said:

"And you did see her, Donald?"

"Yes, Dick; ye dinna think I lied to ye?"

"Not I; but the lieutenant will not let you have a boat until he sees her for himself; now I, nor any of the men, care to have her come around. So, if you will go there and meet her so as to keep her away from here, I will see you have a boat."

"Thank ye, lad, but I winna gang since he maun see her hissel', and he will, before the clock strikes one, to-morrow night."

The Scotchman felt almost beside himself with joy at the success in store. His only fear was, that Isabel would not act well her part.

CHAPTER XI.

A SAILOR'S YARN AND A VERITABLE GHOST.

DONALD rose early the next morning from the few hours' sleep he had obtained, and hastened to conduct Seymore to his allotted task. When they arrived at the spot, he narrated the adventures of the previous night. The young man listened with satisfaction, for he had had many misgivings upon the success of his plan.

"You must communicate at once to Isabel what you have told me, that she may have as much time as possible to school herself in the part she will now have to perform."

The Scotchman hurried away to where she was confined.

"Good-morning, Donald. What good word to-day?" she said, as he entered.

"I think ye will call it good, after I tell ye," he replied.

"Pray, tell it quick," she eagerly answered.

He proceeded, forthwith, to give her, word for word, what had transpired since the last time they met.

"So I am to figure in the play to-night. A life-drama we may truly call it!"

"Yes, leddy, ye maun, or else all is lost."

"But it shall not be; you will find I act my part to the very life—no, death, I should say."

"I hope ye will na make me think ye are a fair ghoulst," he replied, smiling.

"Never fear but I will do all I can to frighten *you*," she answered, with a laugh, the first she had been heard to utter since she had been on the island.

"Ye maun dress a' in white, leddy."

"No, Donald, I think not. It would be better to wear the dress the supposed murder was committed in. It is light, and, besides, you know, all spirits do not appear in the habiliments of the grave."

"Weel, lass, I will na gainsay ye; ye ken better how to dress yer ain sel'."

The entire arrangements were then perfected, and the two parted.

During the day, Donald removed a part of the partition behind the drapery of the council-room, that Isabel might make her appearance suddenly and noiselessly. The buccaneers did not at all relish the probability of seeing the apparition, and had the matter been left to their decision, the Scotchman could have had every boat they possessed to visit the lady's spirit, rather than their eyes should be granted the privilege of beholding her.

"Slowly, to Donald, wore the day, till at length the gloom of night shrouded the island in its somber mantle. The pirates could be seen gathered in groups, here and there, conversing seriously of what that night would reveal. On former evenings they had gathered at an early hour within their banquet-room, but, now, although the ship's bells had struck nine, the place was yet vacant.

"Come, men, let's in and hear the story Dick is to tell us," exclaimed the voice of their officer from the door.

With lingering steps they obeyed, and followed him to the room.

"Pooh, Dick, I smell brimstone already," uttered one of the number.

"Avast heaving," answered Dick; "it's bad enough to see the thing when it does come, without speaking of it beforehand."

"That is so, shipmate; but what a man sees, he sees, and what he smells, he smells, and there's no use running away from it."

"Yes, that is a fact; but you don't see any thing?"

"No; but I think that glim don't burn very bright," replied the man, pointing to the light.

"If she brings all the light Donald tells she had about her last night, we may as well doff it altogether, for all the good it will do."

"But, Dick, they say that a spirit only shows lights when they're out of a dark night, and when they come in a room that's lighted they doff them."

"Avast heaving, I say again; I don't want to hear any more about them, good or bad."

All were now seated, and having partaken of several glasses of grog, their spirits were much revived.

"Now, Dick, for that yarn of yours," said the lieutenant.

The man cleared his throat with sundry coughs and hems, took a sip of liquor, and began :

"I had been laying round London for some months, watching for a good chance to ship. Several captains, who knew me of old as an A B, wanted me to sail with them, but the port they were bound for didn't suit, so I refused. I had made up my mind to go to Bengal, and go I would if I had to wait a year till I could find a ship that suited. I took a cruise, one day, over the East India docks, and was hailed by an officer, who wished to know if I wanted a ship. I told him I did, provided I came across the right kind of craft, and if she was bound for the right port. He showed me his, and though she didn't exactly suit, I made up my mind to go aboard and I told him so. She was an old built Indiaman, with a round stern, and high poop deck, on which were a suit of extra cabins. I thought she was crank for'ards, but after going on board, saw it was the way she was hung aft that made her look so. The men—some of her former crew—told me she was apt to wallow a little in a heavy sea, and was a slow sailer, but she was well built, and although strained a little, was a strong, safe ship. Her name was Mary. The day I went on board, they were playing old Harry with the rats, mice and cockroaches. Her lower decks and hold had been drenched with lime-water. I went on shore, and in a week's time returned with all my tog. The following day we warped out with the flood-tide, and got under way. She carried nothing above her gallant-sails, had a jib and a flying-jib, and her spanker was about half the size of her courses. Her—"

"Well, never mind how many sails she carried. I believe, Dick, if we let you alone, you would tell how many patches she had in her canvas, and the amount of tar on her rigging, to a drop. Let us have the story. We will suppose you out at sea. What happened then?" said the officer, interrupting the man.

"Well, sir," he continued, "we made slow headway till our fourteenth day out, when the wind chopped round and blew from the south'ard, full and free, and before night, round it went again to the north-west. We kept her headed nearly due south, and the old tub, as I called her, scudded along at eight knots an hour. We at last made the African coast, and, as our Captain was hugging it rather close, we kept away about a point west'ard to clear the headlands. Jack Powers and I were cronies, and had seen many a sight about them parts, for he used to tell me some stories that made my hair raise." He paused, and glanced hurriedly about, then continued: "Jack was at the wheel one day, and I had gone aft to coil a rope. When I had finished, I went and said :

"We have a fine breeze, shipmate."

"He looked to windward, before he answered, and then said :

" 'We'll have a calm, Dick.'

" I laughed at him.

" 'You can laugh,' he replied, 'but these are the very latitudes for changes. This breeze may last till six bells and perhaps it won't; the skipper's so precious fond of hugging old Afriky, that we'll be in for it, or my name ain't Jack Powers.'

" 'Perhaps it ain't, Jack,' I said.

" 'Can't say, Dick, whether it is or no, but that's what I go by,' he answered.

" Well, lads, sure enough, before six bells the wind died away, and there we were knocking about. Hot! I wish you had been there, to have had a sample of what frying is. We kept her away a point more to the west'ard, for we began to drift towards the east'ard by a point south, at the rate of three knots an hour. There we drifted for two blessed days, till, on the morning of the third, the breeze sprung up, and filling away we kept on. I was standing by Jack one morning about a week after that, when he said:

" 'Dick, this here's the place to look out for pirates.'

" 'Pirates!' I answered. 'There's no pirates about here?'

" 'But there is, though, for I've seen many a one,' he replied.

" 'And how did you get clear of them?' I asked.

" 'I happened to be in a smarter ship than they,' he answered.

" Just as he said so, the look-out sighted a sail on the weather bow. Jack sprung into the ratlins, and took a look at her.

" 'I don't like the looks of that fellow,' he said.

" 'What do you make him out?' I asked.

" Before he could answer me, the Captain came along, and knowing Jack had cruised in them parts before, handed him his glass, and told him to find out what kind of a vessel she was, if he could. He took a long squint, and then replied:

" 'She's a pirate, sir, though I guess she's loaded.'

" 'A pirate, and loaded! what do you mean?' said the Captain.

" 'Trade is dull with them, sir, and I suppose they've turned to carrying slaves,' replied Jack.

" 'How do you know that?' again asked the Captain.

" 'Well, sir, you see, I know that she's a pirate by her build and the sail she carries, and that she's loaded you can tell yourself, the way her hull's down. Now, sir, she wouldn't be standing the way she is if she wasn't outward bound, and she ain't freighted with nothing but live stock, because there ain't nothing but that kind of cargo to load with off these parts,' answered Jack.

" 'There is a color at the gaff—what is it?' inquired the Captain.

" 'It's the flag of Spain, sir,' replied Jack.

" The ship rapidly gained, and as she neared us, we saw one of her ports slowly open, and then something black went with

a splash into the sea. It came slowly drifting by us, and Jack who had been looking over the lee railings, suddenly called me to him, and pointed it out. When it came close to us, a wave washed it up, and we saw the face of a dead nigger, but as green as grass."

"My God," said Jack, "that ship's got the plague aboard!"

"He hurried to the Captain, and told him what he had seen. The skipper stood for a moment like a man not knowing what to do. At last he woke up, and to the man at the wheel, shouted:

"Put your helm down, hard. Lee braces brace up sharp! Work lively, men; if that ship gets to windward of us you are as good as dead."

"And we did work, and soon had her close hauled, but the slaver gained on us. She was made for speed, and we all saw the Mary couldn't keep away from her."

"Captain," said Jack, "I've been watching that fellow, and it 'pears to me as if the crew were so weak that it is hard work for them to 'bout ship. Watch that man at the wheel; he has to hold himself up while he steers. Now, sir, if you tack ship often we will gain on them, and still keep to windward."

"The Captain adopted the plan, and the Mary was immediately put on the other tack. The wretches saw the maneuver, and, with frantic gestures, called on us to help them, but we kept on changing our tack as often as they did theirs, for it was hard work for them to put their ship in stays owing to their weakness. The next morning we could see nothing of her."

"Ye had a narrow escape," remarked Donald, as the man ceased speaking.

"I should say we had," replied Dick.

"And could na ye do any thing for them?"

"Why, if they had touched our sides, we would have had the plague aboard us."

"Yet it looks hard to have ye leave the poor creatures, without helping them."

"Hard! Ha! ha! ha!" shouted the interested pirates.

"If you had been there, you would have done the same," said Dick.

"I ken I wid, Dick."

The clock by this time pointed within a few minutes of twelve, and the Scotchman began to appear very uneasy.

"Ye had better let me gang, sir, and see the leddy," he at length said, addressing the officer.

"No, Donald, you shall not; for if there is any thing in it, I must see it for myself so as to repeat it to our Captain."

"Weel, ye will na ha' long to wait," he replied.

"But you have time to spin us a short yarn before that lady of yours comes," said the lieutenant, more for the sake of keeping his own spirits up than for the amusement of the story.

Could he invent some tale, whereby the feelings of the men would be worked up as much as possible, before the appearance of Isabel, he knew it would be all the better. Thinking thus, he replied :

"It is yer place to command, mine to obey. So if ye bid me tell ye a story, I maun do it."

"Very well, let us have it."

"It is na use telling ye where I was born, for ye ken a' frae my speech. In my ain country, among the highlands of the northern part, is Loch Loyal. I ha' never seen it my ain sel' but the story has been told me many a time. In days lang gane by, there stood on its northern shore, the castle of Lord Mac Louis, who was a stern, bloody man. He had but one child, a daughter, who he loved wi' a' his heart, and mony the time did she save the life of some poor wretch, by her pleadings. She was a fearless girl, and would gang out on the lake wi' na one wi' her in the boat but her ain sel' to guide it. On one of her sails she had wandered further than her wont, and as she was hurrying home, the wind rose, and her boat being upset she would ha' drowned, but for a young man who, seeing her, plunged in and brought her to the shore. He carried her to one of the huts close by, where she staid till morning, and then took her home, his sel'. She soon learned to love him, and although her father commanded her not to meet him, she wid na hear him, until one evening he came upon them as they sat looking frae a cliff out on the lake. Both drew their blades and fought weel, till the laddy missed his foothold and fell over the cliff and was dashed to pieces on the rocks below. The daughter gazed upon her father for a moment, then sprung after her lover. Her body was conveyed to the castle that same day, and buried ; but her spirit roves about the lake, and many the night the lovers can be seen on the cliff, or else sailing upon the water in the same boat as they did when alive. The lord did— But the ledy, sir ! the ledy ! ye should na ha' tempted her !" exclaimed Donald, breaking into his story, and pointing to where the form of Isabel stood, while his whole manner indicated fear.

The buccaneers turned their affrighted looks in the direction indicated, while those nearest her beat a hasty retreat toward the further extremity of the room, leaving none between her and Donald. Not a sound broke the stillness of the place save the heavy breathing of the men, who, with their looks fixed upon the supposed phantom, till their eyes seemed to start from their sockets, and the cold perspiration standing thickly upon their brows, were ready to die with horror at the sight. And it was a sight that, to their superstitious minds, or, in fact, to the mind of any person who had not been informed of the secret, would have been startling. There she stood, with features as motionless as the dead, and as ghastly, glaring in the faint light

which the pirates thought burned dim. From her left side the blood appeared to flow slowly down her dress, and her long, black hair, hanging loosely around her shoulders, aided to increase the deathlike appearance of her countenance. She slowly approached to where the Scotchman was—who sunk on his knees as she halted near him—and said, in a voice in perfect keeping with her character:

"Did I not bid thee to come to me by the gray rock, as the time told one?"

"Ye did, leddy, ye did, but they would na let me."

"Who?" asked the phantom.

"The lieutenant, leddy; t'was he that said I should na go!"

She slowly turned her black eyes upon the officer, as she uttered in a slow, hollow tone:

"Man, do you dare tempt the power of the dead that you withhold this trembling wretch from doing *my* bidding? Would you bring my curse upon yourself, and must I meet you in the mid-hour of the night, be it at council, feast or ship-board? Would you have me by your side in the silent watch, as your ship battles with the waters I will provoke? Do you dare to tempt my power, you who would not, did not, show mercy to me when I was in yours?"

"It was not I who killed you," stammered the affrighted man.

"You," she continued, turning to Donald, without heeding the officer, "You will repent the time that ever you disobeyed my commands. See," she exclaimed, at the same time pointing with her right hand to the wound, "See, it bleeds afresh!"

This was the climax. The pirates could stand it no longer, but, with horrified cries, rushed from the room, upsetting light, table, and each other in their haste. The Scotchman first hurrying her through the opening, which he immediately replaced as it originally was, followed his companions, while Isabel regained her apartments in safety.

When he reached the open air, he found them discussing what they had seen.

"Did you see her eyes, how they shot fire when she spoke to our lieutenant, because he had not let Donald meet her?" asked one.

"Yes," replied another.

"And when she walked you could not hear the sound of her feet," said a third.

"But that bullet-hole, Dick, did you see how it bled when she pointed to it? I'll tell you what it is, shipmates, if our officer refuses to let Donald have a boat, that ghost will be coming every night of our lives to see us."

"But he shall have a boat!" exclaimed several, at a breath.

"And so he shall, or a ship for that matter, if he wants it," answered the lieutenant, who had overheard the last remark.

At that moment, Donald joined them.

"Weel, lads, ye find out I told ye no lie?"

"Yes," replied the officer. "And we don't want to see any more of her."

"Will ye let me ha' a boat sir?"

"Take one or a dozen if you want them," was the answer.

The Scotchman turned away to seek his bed, and to dream of the longed-for release from the brotherhood's accursed dominion. The ghost had wrought well.

CHAPTER XII.

AT SEA AGAIN. A RACE FOR LIFE.

THE sun rose, the following morning, under a heavy bank of clouds, and the weather betokened a blustery day. About eight o'clock, the look-out spied a sail standing toward the eastward. The lieutenant, after a long look, reported her to be a heavy ship—in all probability a Spanish vessel. This was enough to rouse the pirates to activity, and one of the fleet was soon under way in pursuit.

"We'll have a squally day, sir, I think," said the man spoken of as Dick, who was at the wheel, addressing the officer.

"Yes, I think it more than likely," he replied.

"Will you keep on if the wind freshens?"

"I will wait till it does and then make up my mind."

The ship continued on her course, though it was evident they gained very slowly on the chase, she being a fast sailer. A little after ten o'clock the wind died suddenly to a dead calm, and the heavens grew momentarily blacker.

"We had better take in sail, sir," ventured Dick, as his superior passed him.

"It is I that commands this ship, not you," was the stern response; but in a moment he added: "You are an old salt, Dick, and I will take your advice." Then turning to the men, he said: "Lay aloft, and clew up and clew down, all but the fore-top-mast stay-sail, and close reef the main-top-sail."

As he spoke, a strong puff of wind struck the ship, heeling her over till her scupper-holes were under, and the water came well up on her deck.

"Ay, ay, sir!" replied the men, and a short time served to place her under bare poles, excepting the two sails mentioned.

"How does she head, Dick?"

"North by west, sir."

"Keep her head so as long as you can, for we are in a bad neighborhood to scud before a gale with all those islands to the eastward, and the wind coming out of the nor'-west."

Not a moment too soon was the order to lessen sail been given. The gloom was growing darker and darker. A heavy bank of clouds, toward the north and west, were as black as ink, with a ghastly line of white edging them close down on the seaboard. The wind would blow steadily at times, and then come in angry puffs, not from any particular quarter, but chopping all round the horizon. The sea was beginning to rise, and Dick could be seen to shudder as a huge wave, like some green monster of the unfathomed deep, would roll toward them, lifting the vessel with a quick jerk, and then break to leeward with a spiteful sound, as if in mortification that it had not swept over her.

"Go it, old whitehead," muttered the seaman; "but there's more where you come from that will do better."

A low, moaning sound was now heard, and a phosphorescent glow broke over the water, causing the vessel and crew to stand out in the unearthly glare, like a phantom-ship.

"Meet it Dick, meet it," yelled the officer. "Keep her head to it!"

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the seaman, jerking the wheel round till the spokes fairly cracked.

A huge wall of waters, in one unbroken line, came dashing along, threatening to engulf the vessel. The hurricane was upon them.

"Hold on all, for your lives!" shouted the lieutenant, seizing a belaying pin, and ducking his head to meet the water that swept over her.

For a moment the vessel staggered; her timbers seemed to start from their places; but she bravely threw off the wave, and started with lightning speed before the gale.

As Dick rubbed the salt from his eyes, he looked aloft and saw that both sails were gone.

"The sails are gone, sir."

"Both?"

"Yes, sir."

"We must shake out another."

"The men couldn't do it in this gale."

"They must try, for if we keep on this way two hours, we'll be dashed to pieces on some island."

"I thought we were far enough to the north to go by them."

"And so we are if we could steer due east. How do you head?"

"Sou'-east by east, sir."

"We must get a sail on her, or none of us will see to-morrow. Aloft, lads," he shouted through his trumpet. "Aloft! and loose the fore-top-sail. It's for your lives, men; you'll do it!"

The pirates were aware of the fact, and sprung quickly to the undertaking. The sail was at last set, though it cost three of

their lives. The ship was headed as near east as possible. She strained heavily under her canvas, while her masts seemed ready to start from her deck, and her rigging, to windward, was as tight as fiddle-strings.

"Keep her so," said the officer.

"A ship, sir!—a ship!" fairly screamed one of the men, in a voice that rung above the roar of the tempest.

"Where away?"

"Right off our larboard bow, sir!"

"Put your helm down! h-a-r-d!—we must go astern of her."

"She won't stand it, sir."

"She must—hard down!"

"Very well, sir; hard it is."

The ship, evidently, was one of which they had been in pursuit. Not a sail did she have set; her mainmast was gone, while from the way she rolled, her mizzen threatened to soon follow. For a moment all on board thought nothing would save the two vessels from collision, but, just as the crash was expected, a huge wave—larger than its fellows—shot her rapidly ahead, and they swept by each other, the bowsprit of the pirate sweeping the stranger's stern. The men took a long breath as if relieved of a heavy load, and the vessel was allowed to fall more toward the east. The gale lasted through the entire day, and when it lulled at sundown they were many miles out on the broad Atlantic.

The following morning it was found they had passed through a danger none were aware of. The officer thought they had but barely cleared the north part of Grand Cayco island by the Caycos passage, but, instead, they had gone between Turks' and another small island to the south, and so through the Handkerchief passage out on the Atlantic. How they had succeeded in doing so without as much as seeing land was a mystery to all.

On the morning of the third day they made the island, and soon dropped anchor.

"That's a cruise for nothing," said one of the men to a companion.

"That's a fact. We might just as well have stayed at home."

"How did you like that gale?"

"It's the hardest one I ever was out in."

"But, do you know, I would sooner weather one of the same sort every day than stand in Donald's shoes?"

"You may well say so, shipmate, for I don't mind any thing that belongs to earth; but when you begin talk about t'other world, I'd rather not be around."

"I suppose he's had to call down to the gray rock every night since we have been away."

"Of course he has."

"Well, he can go and see his lady as often as he pleases, so long as she don't return his visits."

While the pirates had been away, excepting those left to guard the island, Donald had not been idle. The moments were now too precious to be wasted, as Morgan might be expected back in a week at the furthest. The wall had not yet been broken through, as he was fearful that the cave might be visited by some prying eye, and thus his much cherished plan be defeated.

"How did you succeed, Donald?" asked Seymore, the day following the visit of the apparition.

"Better than I thought I wid," he replied.

"You succeeded in frightening them well?"

"I wish ye had been there to ha' seen."

"And Isabel—she acted well her part?"

"Yes, laddy."

"Then you have no further fears of obtaining a boat?"

"Na; they will be glad to ha' me gang now."

"Then why wait longer?"

"I ken na reason."

"We will make the trial, then, to-night—shall we?"

"Yes, laddy."

"Very well, we will have it so. You have much to attend to, and had better hasten to accomplish it. Let the lady be conducted into my cave, and, while you bring round the boat, I will assist her down the cliff and be in readiness to meet you."

"But ye dinna ken the road."

"That is true; but there will be plenty of time for you to show it to me before the time arrives for you to meet the ghost," he answered, smiling.

"It is an awful sight to see a ghoust," replied the Scotchman, with mock gravity.

"I don't doubt that it is, though I should like to meet such a one every night."

"I ken ye wid," he replied, with a broad smile, as he hastened away. Stopping at the look-out, he met Dick who was on duty.

"Are ye on the watch to-night?" he asked.

"I shall be, Donald," replied the man.

"And ye will let me ha' the boat?"

"Of course I will. What one do you want?"

"Weel, Dick, I'll tell ye. Ye see it's hard work pullin' out here and back my ain sel', so I should like a sail."

"You shall have one."

"Thank ye, lad; I'll do as much for ye some day," he answered, as he turned away.

Long before night provisions had been carried and deposited in the cave, and all was in readiness for the start.

From the mouth of the cave, that had been walled up, as before mentioned, ran a narrow ledge for some distance. Below

this, at about thirty feet, was a similar one, and still further down, another. From this lowest one it was but a few feet to the beach. Donald had employed his leisure moments in constructing a light, strong ladder of rope, by which Seymore and Isabel could descend to the boat. As the shades of night gathered around, so as to conceal his movements, though from the location of the ledge he would be sufficiently hid, he securely fastened the ladder, and then, returning, broke through the remainder of the wall. In this he was aided by the young man, and, soon, by their united efforts, it was accomplished. The rush of fresh air that instantly filled the place seemed sweeter now that it was inhaled in freedom, and both men threw their arms about each other for very joy.

"Ye maun carry the things out, laddy," said the Scotchman, at last, "while I gang and bring the leddy to ye."

"Away with you, Donald! I'll have them all on the ledge by the time you are back," replied Edward, cheerfully.

As the door was fastened on the outside, Donald was obliged to retrace his steps, which he was not long in doing. Arriving at the door of the place in which the girl was confined, he quickly threw it open and entered.

"Come, leddy, we are ganging off to-night," he said, breaking at once upon the subject.

She could scarcely realize that what she heard was not a dream, for not one word had been told her of their immediate intentions.

"Geing, Donald?" she cried, half doubting.

"Yes, leddy, we are a' ready, and I ha' come for ye."

She realized all in Donald's joyful looks and words, and turning, sunk upon her knees to offer a prayer to Him who had watched over them so well. The honest fellow felt a tear trickle slowly down his weather-beaten face as he heard the accents of that fervent prayer drop from her grateful tongue. It was responded to by his hearty "Amen!" as she ceased and arose to her feet. She smiled as she placed her hand on his arm and signified that she was ready.

"Ye had better take as many things as ye can," he replied, "for there is no telling how lang we may be on the water."

"All the garments I have are here," (pointing to a small bundle); "but there are enough, I think."

They left the place, and, proceeding along the gallery, reached the cave. The bolts were shot back, the door opened, and the lovers were once more together. Donald, with much delicacy, refrained from being a third person to the happy reunion. Without entering, he said:

"Ye ken what ye ha' to do, laddy," and without waiting for a reply, refastened the door for the last time.

Long did the young man and maiden remain locked in each other's arms, too happy to break the charm by words.

"Oh Edward, this is a reward for all that I have passed through!" were the first spoken words of the happy Isabel.

"Dear girl, many as have been the dangers we have passed through, we should not lose sight of Him who has so mercifully been with us."

"I know it, Edward, and I do not," was the fervent reply.

"We have much yet to contend with before we leave you safely at your home; but, as we have been able to pass through terrible ordeals, I hope forever gone, those that we may encounter will be light."

"We have but to think of the present, dear Edward. Let the past, if not forgotten, be thought of only as a frightful dream. Of the future, let us but hope for that, and, though clouds may come, we will look but on their bright sides, for there is not one but has its golden lining."

"Sweet comforter! we will but do as you say, and God give us his aid to do it with."

After closing the door, Donald hurried along the gallery, and sought the presence of the lieutenant.

"Well, Donald, how about that spirit? Have you seen her?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir, I ha' seen her every night since ye ha' been away."

"You go to-night, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And want a boat?"

"Yes."

"You can have one, of course, without asking me again."

"I did na ken but I maun ask ye, sir."

"Ask me! why, I told you after what I saw the other night you might have every boat in the fleet before I would object."

The officer turned and left him as he made this remark, and Donald repaired to the landing, where he found that Dick, true to his promise, had left a small boat by which he could reach the ship. As it was yet early he repaired to his quarters, and secured about his person the rich jewels that had been allotted him from time to time as his share of the plunder. They amounted to a large sum, and he determined to take them with him. As the distant sound of the ship's bells came floating over the water, informing him that eleven o'clock had arrived, he rose from his rude cot and started for the boat.

"Who's there?" asked Dick, as Donald's boat grated the ship's side.

"It's me, Dick," he answered.

"Oh, it's you, is it? Well, Donald, your boat is moored fast by the fore-chains, with a bran new spread of canvas in her. You can leave your cockle-shell hitched there till you come back."

"Thank ye, Dick: but wid na ye like to gang wi' me?"

"What! me go with you? I am much obliged to you, but I rather think not."

"Then I'll ha' to gang alane."

While this conversation was going on, the Scotchman had made the smaller boat fast, and, entering the other, was busily hoisting sail. Every thing was arranged to his satisfaction at last. Casting off the painter, he gave her bows a shove so as to clear the ship, and, seating himself, hauled aft the sheet till the sail filled, and stood out in the direction of the gray rock.

"A quick trip to you!" called Dick, as he saw his shipmate had got under way.

"I hope so wi' a' my heart," he answered. "And it's the last ye will see o' me for mony a day, I hope," he muttered, in an undertone.

He now had a chance of examining the boat, and found her to be one of the best they had. Morgan had taken the best with him. She was broad and set high out of water, making her not only stiff, but able to ride a rough sea. As soon as he had gained distance enough to hide his movements, he changed his course, and headed directly for the mouth of the harbor. He could scarcely refrain from giving vent to a long, loud cheer as he felt himself on the ocean's bosom, without the hated presence of a single buccaneer. As his boat rounded the headland, he turned to look, for the last time, at his late home, when the snapping of a sail caused him to glance quickly ahead, and there, standing directly toward him, was the fleet of Morgan. For a moment he gave up all for lost, but the hope that he had not been discovered caused him to regain his activity. Quickly changing his course he stood directly for the land, till he reached water that was not of sufficient depth to float a ship. The sail he then hauled down, so as not to attract attention, and waited quietly for the issue. The vessels rapidly approached until within a short distance, when he heard the order given, in a voice which he recognized as Morgan's, to "go about." As the last ship of the fleet lost itself in the darkness, Donald again hoisted sail and soon arrived at the place where the young people were waiting.

"Be quick, laddy, and help the leddy in, for Morgan has cam hame," he said, as he sprung on shore and commenced loading the bundles.

The words acted like magic. A few moments saw them starting from the island.

"You say that Morgan has come home?" asked the young man.

"Yes, laddy," he replied.

"Have you seen him?"

"Na, but I saw his vessels as I cam round the point."

"But you are sure he did not see you?"

"Na, I think he did na, for if he had they would ha fired a gun."

"It will not be long before they miss us. Ah! there goes a gun," he added, as the report of a cannon floated down from windward.

"Yes, but it is na for us they fired."

"I remember now, it is the signal of their arrival."

The wind blew free from the north and the boat, with her full sheet started, made rapid headway, the water gurgling and rippling merrily under her bows. In the stern sat Donald, while at his side reclined Isabel. Edward was in the bows acting as a look-out. For an hour they had kept on without exchanging a word. A sudden exclamation from Donald caused the young man to look up, and he saw the red glare of a rocket shoot upward in the sky, followed quickly by another and another.

"What is that for, Donald?"

"They ha' missed us."

"And, of course, will send a vessel in pursuit?"

"Yes, laddy; but ye maunna be afraid, for we are too far awa' for them to overhaul us before we reach the island."

The wind had been slowly hauling round to the westward, and steadily freshening.

"I dinna like this wind, laddy, it blows too fresh," said Donald.

"There is no danger, I hope."

"Na; but we will ha' to keep awa' to the east'ard, for she winna stand up to be close-hauled."

"If that is all I can not see what you do not like"

"I will tell ye. If the wind blew so we could take it on our quarter, we wud reach the island two or three hours sooner; but, as it is now, we will ha' to keep to the east, so that we will land on the easterly part of it, and ha' a' the m'ore sailin' to do."

"I understand you; but any thing is better than being within reach of the buccaneers."

As the day broke, they made a small cove into which the boat was shot. After safely mooring it, they disembarked. The Scotchman set about preparing a simple repast. While he was engaged in this, Seymore ascended the brow of the hill, behind which the cove lay, and gazed out toward the sea. As his eye wandered toward the western seaboard, he saw two ships standing directly toward where they were. He felt convinced they belonged to his late captors, and hurried to communicate the fact to Donald. The two instantly ascended again, and the Scotchman had scarcely rested his eyes on them before he said:

"They are Morgan's ships; I ken them weel."

"You do not think they could have seen us?"

"I hope not, laddy; but, we had better hide the boat," and he hurried away to avert the impending danger.

Seymore was convinced his companion felt afraid the ships had caught sight of them before they shot behind the lee of the hill, and he hurried after him to render all the assistance he could.

Arriving at the boat, by their united efforts the mast was unstepped and securely lashed to the seats. She was then drawn further up the cove and completely hid under a luxuriant growth of wild vines. As soon as this was done, search was made to find some secure place for themselves.

"Ye had better run and take a look at what the ships are doin', and I'll try to find some place to hide in."

Edward hastened away, and, as he reached the hill-top, saw one of the vessels come up into the wind, and a boat quickly lowered from her side. He waited long enough to see it start, and found it was heading directly for the cove. He immediately regained his companion and reported the fact.

"I dinna think they'll find us," said Donald.

"Where is Isabel?" inquired the young man, as he saw she was absent.

"I ha' her hid where they will ha' to look mony the while before they find her, I ken."

"I sincerely hope, for that matter, they will find none of us."

The place in which Isabel was hid, and to which they now repaired, was a singular cave or burrow hollowed in the bank of a small hill, and completely hidden by a strong overgrowth of vines and tangled shrubbery. Donald's quick eye had caught it at a glance, making Seymore think the Scotchman had before been on the island.

They had safely ensconced themselves, when the dip of oars met their ears, and, through the dense shrubbery, they saw the pirates' boat shoot into the cove and ground on the beach.

"Well, you lubber, where's that boat, now we're here?" said a voice which they recognized as belonging to the officer who had been left in charge of the island.

"I can't tell, sir; but I thought I saw her stand in here," replied the man whom he had addressed.

"You thought, you crab-headed coot. I thought you said you were certain you did when you were on the ship," said the officer, in an angry tone.

"A man's apt to be mistaken, isn't he?"

"Don't ask me any questions, but tell me what you thought you saw."

"I saw the glimmer of somethin' white, that I thought was a boatsail for a moment, off this small headland, and then I lost it. It might have been the blink of a gull's wing, sir."

"I'll give something for the skin of your back to make heel taps of if we go back to Morgan without that precious Scotchman."

Donald gave a hitch to his shoulders.

"I can't help it, I only told you what I saw," replied the man, sullenly.

"No more talk, but look about and hunt them up. If they are here we'll find them."

The pirates scattered themselves in every direction, but their search proved useless; no traces of the fugitives could be discovered, and, with muttered curses, they regained their boat. Donald allowed sufficient time to elapse before he left his shelter and then carefully ascending the brow of the hill, gazed off at the fast receding boat. He saw it reach the vessel's side to be hoisted to its place. The yards were braced round, and she was soon hull down toward the westward.

"Well, laddy, they're gang, and so will we," said Donald, as he returned to Isabel and Edward.

The boat was drawn from its secure hiding-place, the mast stepped and fastened down; the party re-embarked, and again were dashing finely along the coast toward their destined port.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STORY OF A NIGHT.

THE first inquiry Morgan made, upon reaching the island, was after Seymore.

"He is well, sir," replied his officer, "and has been kept busy ever since your absence. But I have a matter of some surprise to communicate."

"Indeed! what is it?"

"We have all seen a ghost, sir."

"A what?"

"A spirit, sir."

"Explain. I do not understand you."

"Donald informed me that you gave instructions to him to have the Spanish girl made away with."

"Well, yes; go on."

"He shot her, and, as he supposed, dead; but as he laid hold of the body to drag it away, she opened her eyes, and fixed such a look on him that it almost froze his blood, while, in a solemn voice, she said: 'Donald, I have many things to tell you. Meet me every night at the gray rock at the small hour. If you do not come to me I will come to you, be it at council, feast, or shipboard.' He told me this, and wanted a boat—"

"Ah! a boat? But go on."

"I did not hardly believe the tale, so I determined to be assured of the truth before I granted his desire. This story, sir he told me in the presence of all the men, after he had returned

from the rock the first night after the deed. I fixed the following night as the one to test whether the spirit of the woman would be as good as her word. Without his suspecting it, I set a watch on his actions and also to prevent his meeting her. Well, sir, we were all gathered in the banquet hall, and at a little before one, as he was spinning a yarn, she suddenly appeared before us, in the same dress she wore when he killed her; and, sir, it was no trick, for I will swear it was no live person we saw—"

"Liar, idiot, fool! Have you no brains that you could not see into the cheat? Are you as blind or stupidly superstitious as the commonest seaman?" shouted Morgan, rising to his feet in a torrent of rage.

The lieutenant trembled but answered not a word.

"And you let him have a boat?"

"Yes, sir."

"He is off to-night, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"Come with me, fool, and I will show you what has become of the ghost and her two companions."

He rushed from the room as he spoke, followed by the now thoroughly affrighted officer. Along the gallery they dashed till they arrived at the cavern's door. This they found locked, but Morgan had snatched the key from the peg as he passed it, and, inserting it in the lock, shot back the bolts, threw open the door and entered.

"See there!" he said, pointing to the broken wall. "See there, you thick-headed, lolloping swab; do you think a ghost made such a hole as that in that solid wall?"

"I see it all now, sir," ventured the man.

"Oh, you do! It's a great wonder you are alive to say so after that horrid fright. But we will see further."

He passed through the opening and out on the ledge.

"Here is another ghostly contrivance," he said, taking hold of the rope-ladder, and drawing it up. "Do spirits want this to climb a cliff?"

The officer made no reply.

They then retraced their steps along the gallery, and out into the open air. Here Morgan ordered the rockets fired, which was the night signal for the ships to weigh anchor without delay.

"Pull, you lubberly hounds," he shouted, as he reached his boat and sprung into the stern-sheets.

The men lay back on their oars till the stout blades bent like reeds, and the boat at every stroke seemed to fairly leap out of the water.

"Is that anchor up?" he called out, as he neared the ship.

"It's a-peak, sir," came the hoarse response.

"Trip it then." Then turning to his men, he ordered. "Lay her by the fore-chains. I'll get aboard by them. A thousand

dollars in hard silver"—and his voice floated clear and distinct across the water, reaching the ears of all—"to the man who brings me the body of Donald, alive or dead; and a thousand more for the young Englishman alive."

We will not recount in detail the chase after the fugitives, as the reader is already aware of the final result. We may add, however, that Morgan, thoroughly infuriated at the loss of his game, ordered the lieutenant to be executed for his betrayal of trust and lack of vigilance. A few murmured, and evinced signs of mutiny, but the determined will of Morgan soon overawed them. The officer was hung at the yard-arm the day after his return from the pursuit, and the men returned to their duty, fearing their leader more than ever.

The fugitives sped pleasantly on their way along the coast, passing the ports of Paix and Jean Rabel without stopping, and were now lying in a snug little harbor under the lee of Cape la Mole. Here they were obliged to wait for the wind to abate, for it had blown too fresh for them to attempt crossing to the nearest point of Cuba, some fifty miles, in their open boat.

"The wind holds as well as ever," said Edward, the morning of the third day.

"Yes, laddy, and it wid be the very thing we wanted, did we ha' a larger boat," answered Donald.

"How long do you think it will be before it will go down?"

"I canna say, Mr. Seymore; the wind blows lang in these parts, when it rises as this did."

"Mr. Seymore!" uttered the young man, noticing Donald had called him by his name for the first time. "Why do you call me by that formal name?"

"And it is yer name, sir."

"Certainly it is. And sir, too! What has got into you?"

"Not any thing," he replied, evasively.

"Donald, you have a meaning for this change of manner in addressing me. What is it?"

"Weel, sir, if I maun tell ye I maun. Ye will soon be at Cuba."

"But what of that?"

"And ye will soon marry the leddy."

"God grant me that blessing! But what of it?"

"And when ye marry her ye will be a gentleman."

"I hope I am one now; but do come to the point."

"I ken ye are that now; but I mean ye will be what we call a gentleman in my ain country."

"Oh, I understand you now, old friend," said Edward, laughing. "But, Donald, do you think that rank or station, even if I was raised to a throne, would make a change in my feelings toward you?"

"I hope not," he answered, hesitatingly.

"Be assured of it, Donald," replied Edward, taking his hand, and adding, with much warmth: "Never shall we forget the great service you have performed in effecting our escape. What would my efforts have amounted to without you? It is true, I should have made the trial, but it would have ended there, for I am confident, from what I have seen, that the attempt would not have been crowned with success. To you, then, we owe all—life, happiness, friends—every thing. Ah! our debt is so heavy we will not be able to repay it."

"But I—" he stopped, as if he wished to say something of which he was ashamed.

"You seem not to believe me. I will call the lady; perhaps her words will reassure you of our gratitude and obligations."

He hurried away, and returned with Isabel, not heeding the words the Scotchman essayed to speak.

"Our friend here has addressed me as '*Mr.*' and '*Sir.*' I have tried to convince him that the gratitude we owe him is lasting; but, it appears my words are not of sufficient weight to relieve his apprehensions. Will you, dear girl, add your assurances to mine, of our regard and desire for his companionship?"

"Na, la ldy—if I maun call ye so—ye dinna ken my meaning," he said, before she could speak.

"And pray then, Donald, what is it?" asked Edward.

"I was ganging to say, ye would na like to ha' me when ye cam hame, because I am—" again he hesitated.

"Out with it, man."

"Because I am a buccaneer."

Both burst into a merry laugh, and it was many minutes before either could suppress their merriment to answer him. There was such a comical expression on the Scotchman's face that, as they looked, their laughter broke out afresh.

"Why, Donald, for that matter we are all buccaneers," at length said Isabel.

"Na, leddy," he replied; "ye never shed blood, and I ha'."

"You did not do it of your own free will, Donald."

"Na, leddy, they made me. I never harmed where I *could* show mercy."

"Very well, that gives you a full claim to our protection, and we shall insist upon your becoming a member of the household on the estate."

This set the matter at rest, and they wended their way back to the boat. As a protection from the spray and dews of the atmosphere, the sail had been slipped from the mast and spread across the boat. In the stern had been arranged a rude, though comfortable bed, on which Isabel could repose. The men guarded it by turns, so as it should not become unfastened and drift to sea with its fair freight. Night had now come on, and Donald had stretched himself on the soft grass to sleep, while

the young man passed hurriedly to and fro on the beach, as if some unpleasant thought occupied his mind.

"I fear it, and yet why should I?" he muttered. "She is young, and yields to feelings without due reflection. Am I doomed to disappointment—to have the hope that I have so fondly cherished, and the cup of bliss dashed from my lips before I have hardly tasted it? Oh, this is torture to feel so. But why do I hesitate? The subject has to be broached some time, and why not now? I will. Come, Seymore, be a man, and meet with firmness whatever fate has in store for you."

He turned and approached the boat.

"Are you sleeping, Isabel?" he asked.

"Is that you, dear Edward? I have had such a sweet, sweet dream."

"Yes, dear girl, it is I; but I regret that I have disturbed your slumbers."

"You need not," she replied; "for, as you are dear to me even in slumber, why should I regret to be awakened by your voice. Come hither and let us talk. Shall I tell you my dream?" she asked, as he took his seat at her side.

"I shall be pleased to listen to it."

"Well, now, you must hear every word, for it is too good to lose any. I dreamed that I was at my home again, surrounded by old friends and familiar faces. The old house was lit up, and the guests were coming in one long, continuous line. I was in the hands of my maids, who were decking me for the *sacrifice*. My dear old aunt was the gayest of the gay, and every one seemed so proud of my choice. Can you tell me who *that* was?"

"I can say, dear girl, who I *hope* it was—myself."

"Apt guesser! At last all was in readiness, and, taking your arm, we descended to the rooms below. A short time sufficed to make me *your wife*. Your *wife*! Oh, how the dear word hangs upon my lips. It loves to tarry there. Your wife at last—to have all your devotion for my own rich possession, nevermore to be separated."

Her woman's heart grew too full for further utterance, and she gave way to weeping—a sweet sorrow—the grief of fulfilled happiness. She resumed, after a moment's pause:

"I said we were married, and, after receiving the congratulations of friends, the festivities of the evening commenced. I finally tired and sought a couch, on which I soon fell into a slight slumber. It was your voice that roused me, not to the realization of my dream, but to the reality of being in a boat, miles away from home, and ensconced under a sail."

She broke into a merry laugh, and raised her eyes to his face, which by the pale light of the stars that stole under the sail, he saw were radiant with the light of a fond and satisfied love.

"Do you like my dream?"

"Yes, Isabel, but it was *only* a dream."

"Dreams *have* their realities, if we but strive to bend them to our will. It is thus that events cast their shadows before," she replied, earnestly yet inquiringly, as if to fathom the thoughts in his heart.

"Isabel, listen to me," he began, in a tremulous voice. "While we were on the island, alone and friendless, it was but natural that we should cast our destinies together; but now that we are away from it, and you are soon to be among controlling friends, it is a moment for us to banish dreams, and look at the destiny which circumstances may order for us—for me—a comparative stranger to you and your family—without wealth, without rank or social position. You have given me your affection under circumstances which seemed to *compel* it. Is it *impossible* that, when once again in the circle of your gay and proud admirers—when your heart is free to act as it may be influenced, I may not be misplaced in your society? I am a poor man, but I am too proud in my poverty to ever accept any station which is not my own by unquestionable right. I do not doubt your truthfulness as you now feel; but I may be forgiven if I should entertain doubts of your power to cast aside all the influences which wealth, rank, power can bring to bear upon you to divert if not to estrange the affection you now feel for me. I will not wrong you now by saying, I do not love you, for God only knows that I love you better than all others—I love you with my entire soul—I shall never love another. But all this shall not make me forget the great gulf between us, nor induce me to accept your hand, if that acceptance must bring with it humiliation for you or indignity to me. Isabel"—he laid his hand in her own—"Isabel, as I love you I bid you think of this, and I ask you to be just unto me by saying no word—encouraging no hope, that can not be redeemed in honor and peace to us both."

She sat still and motionless as the very stones. Her heart had almost ceased to beat at Seymore's calm, determined words. Their wisdom, their propriety, dropped into her heart like stones into the clear waters of a deep well, to stir her whole being to its deepest depth. Minutes passed in silence. To Edward they seemed hours.

At length she moved. Casting her eyes to heaven, Seymore saw the great tears dropping down over her cheek, and well read the agony they expressed. Slowly lifting her hand, she pointed to the evening star, glimmering above them in its fairest radiance. The words came low but full and clear from her lips:

"Edward Seymore, I love you! That star shall be a sign of my devotion to that love. It shall not burn longer in the heavens than the love for you shall burn in my soul. Wealth, title, homage, position—what are they all without the heart at peace?"

I am mistress of them all, but you alone are master of peace: will you, dare you deny it to me, to yourself, from any motive of pride or fear?" She paused, but he made no answer. She resumed: "Edward Seymore, here is my hand. With it I offer such devotion as the blood of a Castilian can only bring."

Her hand was extended. Seymore took it, drew the pale face down to his bosom, imprinted a kiss on the upturned lips—the seal of their life-long trust. Isabel gave way to her tears, and, overcome by her sudden excitement, fell back upon her couch, as helpless as a child. Seymore, carefully covering her from the night-wind, stole noiselessly ashore to walk the beach all the hours until day, having for companionship the angel of Isabel's presence.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOMEWARD BOUND AND HOME AGAIN.

Not far from the town of St. Iago de Cuba lay the De Cordova estate. The house was built more for comfort than for beauty. It partook both of the castle and the villa in its architectural design, and besides possessing all the adjuncts of a convenient residence, could be converted into a stronghold of defense. At the time it was built, this latter precaution was a necessity, since the accounts that reached Europe of the untold riches not only of these islands, but also of the entire "land of Montezuma" which had been subjugated by the Spaniards, flooded the country with a horde of men of the lowest grade in society. These adventurers, finding that the houses of the natives were not roofed with gold, as reported, nor, that precious stones lay unnoticed on the ground, formed themselves into bands of robbers, pillaging and laying waste whole districts in their search after plunder. Hence the residences of those early settlers, as their strongholds, had been built with the design of defending their lives and property from these men, as well as for comfort.

The Cordova mansion was situated on a gentle slope of ground, that stretched from the ocean shore far away toward the woody hills in the rear. The house was constructed of stone, with frowning battlements of wood, which added much to its solid appearance. A little to the right ran a mountain stream, that emptied itself into a cove or recess, in which the sea-water backed itself. In this were moored several small boats, showing the fondness of its inmates for excursions on the water.

Let us enter, and see what is passing during the absence of its mistress

In an easy-chair, at the head of a table, sits an elderly lady, whose aged outlines yet possessed traces of their youthful loveliness. She was dressed in black, and her furrowed cheek wore traces of tears. By her side sat a man of commanding appearance, who was perusing a paper he held in his hand.

"And these are all?" he inquired.

"Yes, Senor."

"She never thought of arranging the estate in case she died before marrying?"

"Never."

"Is there no provision made for such an event?"

"You have her father's will, and it contains all the arrangements ever made."

"It will be necessary to submit the settlement, then, to the proper authorities."

"I leave it entirely to you, Senor, feeling confident you will use all your endeavors in seeing it adjusted fairly."

"I shall, lady, and thank you for your flattering opinion of my sincerity."

"Need I indulge in hopes of ever seeing her again? of—"

"Pardon me," he said, interrupting her, "but all hopes are vain; we should have received news from Spain long before this, if the vessel had arrived."

"Then she was lost, and all on board perished!"

"No, lady, the ship was not lost."

"How, Senor?—you say the ship was not lost?"

"It is so, lady."

"Then the passengers—the crew—where are they?"

"When I was last here, I told you that news had been received of the non-arrival of the vessel at Spain. I conjectured, therefore, that she had been lost at sea; but I am deeply pained to say, since then she has been seen in command of the buccaneers of Tortuga."

"Oh! God—is this so? Oh, Isabel, my child!" she could only utter, as, bursting into tears, she gave way to grief.

"Calm yourself, I pray," he said, soothingly.

"Would to God I knew she were dead. Oh, Isabel, my poor child!"

"Be assured her fate is not as you surmise—she is dead."

"Convince me of this, Senor!" she exclaimed, wildly.

"I can, and simply from the fact of her being a Spaniard."

"Ah! how?"

"Morgan, their chief, never spares a Spanish life, it is said, be it of man or woman."

"But, she is so fair, so lovely, he may conceive a hateful passion for her."

"As beautiful women as she have fallen in his grasp, but they have all been dealt with alike, lady; that man is only susceptible of the feeling of hate of our race."

"I must believe you, Senor. Oh, my God, I thank thee if she be but dead!"

"Then you will return to Spain?" he asked, as he arose and moved toward the door.

"I certainly shall, as soon as all is adjusted," she replied. "Nothing is now left for me to live for."

She followed him out, and stood conversing on the broad piazza that had but lately been built around the house. As the nobleman was descending the steps, he suddenly paused and looked toward the ocean. After a moment he returned and walked toward the north part of the building.

"What do you see, Senor?" she asked, going toward him.

"There is a ship's boat approaching, with three persons in it."

"Where do you see it?"

"Look over the mast of that boat. Do you see?"

"Yes, I see it now. But who can they be that they should come in upon this shore?"

"I see two men, and assuredly the third is a female." He betrayed unusual emotion at the announcement.

"A female!" she exclaimed, echoing his words. What a hope sprung up in her tortured breast at the thought!

"Yes, lady, and *she waves to us!*" The gentleman waved his hat in the air in response.

* * * * *

Early on the morning following the interview between Isabel and Seymore, they were aroused by Donald, and instant preparations made for the start. The wind had died down to a gentle breeze, ruffling the surface of the ocean into tiny ripples. The sail was hoisted, and, every thing being ready, they bid adieu to the little harbor and shaped their course for Cuba. The boat seemed to imbibe the happy feelings of its inmates, as it threw off the water from its bows into the showers of spray, and dashed along with a merry, musical sound.

"It will not take us long to run over, will it Donald?" asked Seymore, as he watched the bubbles glide rapidly along the sides.

"Not long, laddy; about a day," was his answer.

"As long as that? Why, how far is it?"

"Full fifty miles, I think."

"But, twenty-four hours should carry us further than that, and with this breeze."

"Yes, laddy, it wid, did we but stand straight over."

"And why can't we?"

"The tide sets a little between these islands, and we maun keep her head to the south, or we will drift out of our course."

"And what is the reason of that?"

"I dinna ken, 'less the water draws toward the Gulf stream."

As Donald said, it was early the following morning before the point of the island, for which they were headed, loomed up in the gray mist.

"Land, ho!" shouted Edward, the first to catch its outline

"Where away?" asked his companion, laughing.

"Straight ahead," he answered, in an unsailor-like manner.

"Na, laddy, ye are na right."

"What should I have said?" he asked, joining in the other's glee.

"A point off the starboard bow."

"Is that Cuba?" asked Isabel, rousing herself from her sleep at the voice of Seymore.

"Yes, leddy," answered the Scotchman.

"Dear old Cuba," she said, raising herself and looking at it long and tearfully.

"You will soon be home, dear girl," replied the young man, coming aft to where she was seated.

"Say we," she replied, smiling as she extended her hand for his greeting.

"Well, *we*," he answered.

"How far are we off now, Donald?" she asked.

"I dinna ken where yer hame is, leddy."

"You know where St. Iago de Cuba is?"

"Weel leddy, weel."

"My estate is but a few miles east of there."

"Then I can tell ye pretty near. We are a few miles south of Point de Maysi, so we are one hundred miles frae yer hame."

"So far away as that? You are not mistaken, are you?"

"Na, I ken these parts weel," he answered.

A short time elapsed before the boat reached the shore. They landed, and after partaking of a simple repast, rose and walked inland a short distance to remove the stiffness their long voyage had given them. As the sun rose, the breeze blew stronger; but Donald was not as careful now, for he knew that if it blew too strong for them, they could run in to the shore at any moment. So they embarked and stood on their way along the coast by short tacks. It was not till about the middle of the eighth succeeding day, that their much-longed-for harbor hove in sight. The feelings of the little company at sight of this dear spot, can be better imagined than described. Isabel seemed almost beside herself with joy, and thought the boat had suddenly taken a lazy fit—as she expressed it—it appeared to move so slowly.

As they came nearer the villa, the forms of two persons could be seen standing on the piazza; one of them she instantly recognized as that of her beloved aunt. She rose and waved her scarf as a signal, and then, overcome by her emotions, hid her face and gave way to her joyous feelings in a flood of tears.

Donald felt himself like an emperor returning in triumph. He trimmed the sheet in close, as they passed the little headland, and as the boat shot into the cove, he kept her headed for the landing-place, until Seymore was fearful he intended

running it down, or to try and end the adventure by sinking the little craft; but, as the crash might be momentarily expected, he gave a sheer to the helm, let the sheet run, and rounded to with so much skill that she touched with scarcely force enough to break an egg. Then rising, with a bound, he cleared the boat and alighted on the wharf. Swinging his tarpaulin round his head, he gave vent to his feelings by a prolonged cheer that seemed to wake the old house into life, as it echoed back the notes of joy from the startled inmates, who came rushing down to the landing in a tumultuous crowd. Our heroine was soon clasped in the arms of her aunt, who looked on her as one risen from the dead. Edward was joyfully welcomed by all, and Donald, in his quaint dialect, was soon the center of an excited crowd, answering questions. The happy party soon wended their way toward the house.

"Now, my dear aunt, do not ask me to tell my story to-day. Just let me enjoy home," she said, as question after question was showered upon her. "Wait until to-morrow, when we will have our friends summoned, and all can have the pleasure of listening to it."

Early that night Edward retired to rest, but not to sleep. In his half-waking mood he lived over the precious past, and his heart leaped over the moments to the hour when Isabel's dream should be rounded into reality. All night long there was music in his soul—a strange commingling of sound and sense—the uproar of waters and the low, tender accents of a woman's love. The first early dawn found him up, wandering down to the landing where lay the boat, now so rich in associations. He was not long alone in his walk; for Donald, too, was out with the dawn to see his boat.

The day following the return, invitations were extended to the most intimate friends of the family, to be present at the recital of the story of Isabel's marvelous adventures and escape from the pirates' stronghold. It need not be said every one was present, for her safe return had been heralded over many miles of the adjacent country, where she was well known.

She told the story with touching pathos, dwelling longer on the scenes in which Edward figured, than on those which related to her own sufferings. At the close she said:

"And now, friends, I have told you all. You have listened to no idle tale, but to the afflictions that an All-Wise Providence has seen fit to shower upon me. This young man has been my support—he has periled his life for me, and, by his efforts together with those of Donald, I have been restored to you. What amount of thanks will repay him, what gift recompense? None! But, he has asked one, and poor as it is in itself, he shall have it."

She approached him, as she spoke, and, turning toward the company—who were interested to see what that gift was—drew

from her bosom a roll of parchment. Placing it in his hand, she also let her own hand remain in his grasp. Then drawing her figure proudly up, she exclaimed:

"Thus do I, Isabel de Cordova, of my own free will and accord, give unto him the right and title of all my possessions, and with them my own poor hand and heart forever!"

The entire company rose to their feet, and burst into one continuous round of applause. There was something so frank, so free, so noble in her behavior, that even those who stood on the long-decreed proprieties of "equal marriages," felt that Seymore was worthy of the alliance.

For a long time Morgan had used every effort to obtain traces of the fugitives, but they were useless. The year following their escape, he made an expedition to Maracaybo. The place he found deserted, but had the good fortune in discovering the wealth of the citizens, which they had secreted in the woods. He then sailed for Gibraltar; but, although he practiced the most cruel tortures on the inhabitants, they refused to show him their treasures, and, as he was about to set sail, he found himself blockaded by three Spanish men-of-war. These he boldly attacked, burnt two with a fire-ship, and defeated another.

We will not give the many adventures of this remarkable buccaneer, nor further speak of the bloody deeds he committed, before the death that he had so often dealt with remorseless hand to the Spaniards fell to his lot, and his spirit winged its flight after that of his much-loved Atala. Donald was ever his vigilant, tireless foe, and acted well his part in bringing the career of the monstrous criminal to an end.

"Two years of wedded bliss! Edward and Isabel are sitting on the front piazza, enjoying the evening breeze. Edward, with his arms around his wife, and his little one on his knee, is too full of happy thoughts to speak. The child at length gives a slight shiver, as if the air was too damp for its tiny being. Isabel rises, and calling the nurse, the little one is carried, after many kisses and caresses, to its downy bed.

"Wife, do you remember the story that Morgan told me?"

"Yes, but why?"

"I could not then see how even it would force his better nature so completely into the grave of his Atala as to allow him to war with such inveterate hatred against your nation; but I can see it now."

"To be deprived of the beings we love, dear Edward, is a woe past all comprehension," she replied, as her eyes filled with tears.

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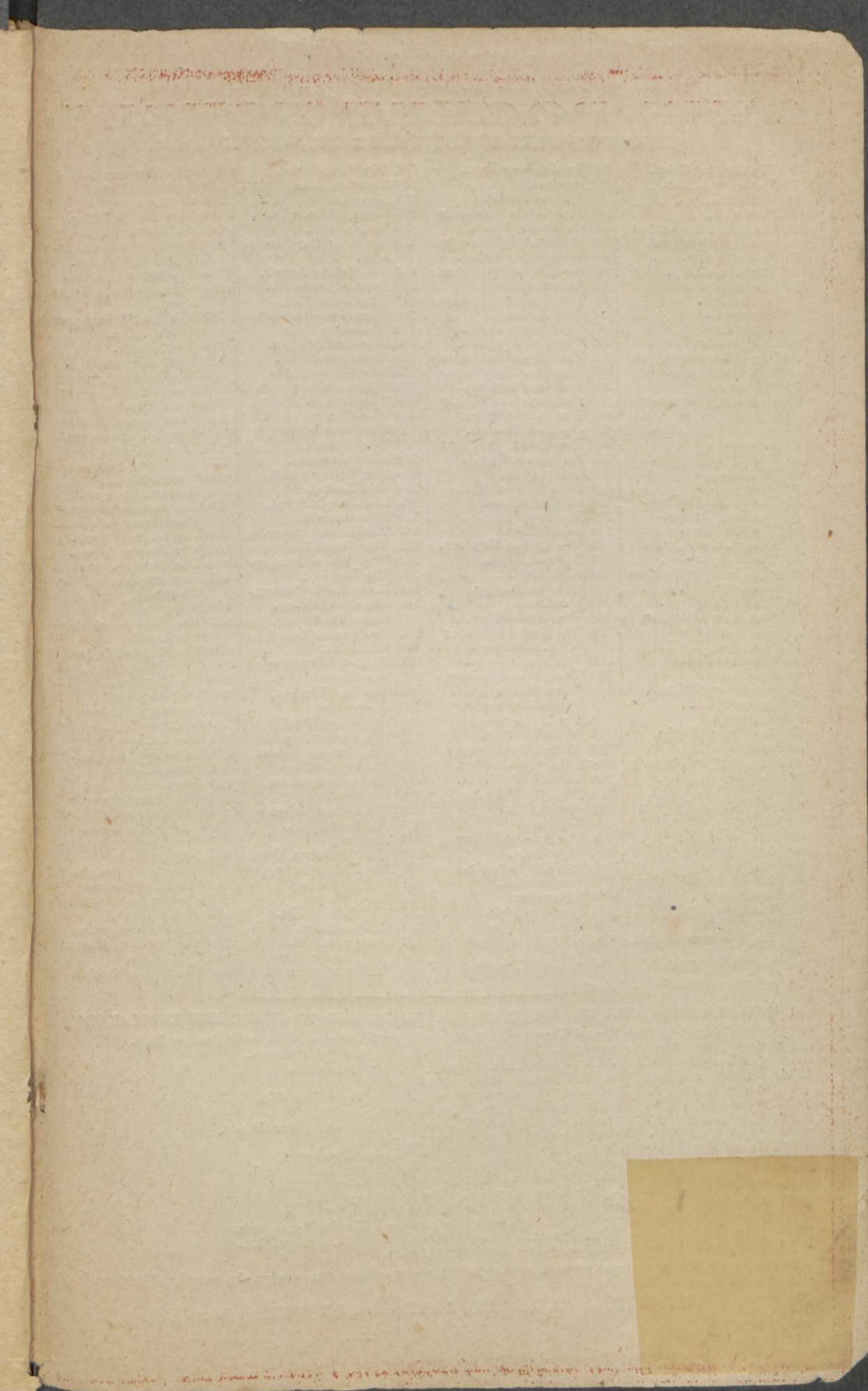
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